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HOW DOES THE DEATH OF CHRIST SAVE US?

HENRY C. MABIE, D.D.



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**HOW DOES THE
DEATH OF
CHRIST SAVE US?**

“The hands upon that cruel tree,
Extended wide as mercy’s span,
Have gathered to the Son of man
The ages past and yet to be.

One, reaching backward to the prime,
Enfolds the children of the morn;
The other, to a race unborn
Extends the crowning gift of time!”

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HOW DOES THE DEATH OF CHRIST SAVE US?

OR
THE ETHICAL ENERGY
OF THE CROSS

By
HENRY C. MABIE, D. D.

*Being ready always to give answer
to every man that asketh you a
reason concerning the hope that is
in you, yet with meekness and fear.
1 Peter 3 : 15.*

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M. R.

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HOW DOES THE DEATH OF CHRIST SAVE US ?

I

A Question of Questions

NOT long since a friend of the writer propounded the above question to a theologian of repute. The answer returned was so hesitant and confused as to surprise and disappoint the querist. The difficulty implied in the question has perplexed many minds.

In the recent book, "The Heart of the Gospel," by Dr. James M. Campbell, the author has this reference to the so-called "Moral Influence View" of the atonement, as set forth by the late Prof. Geo. B. Stevens, D. D., of Yale Theological Seminary: "The main thing lacking in the view is that it does not show how the work of Christ is so related to sin as to be made effective to salvation, nor does it tap the deep fountain

of motive from which the moral influence of the Saviour's influence springs. It predicates an effect without an adequate cause." And yet this "Moral Influence View" of the atonement is supposed by many to reduce to a minimum the difficulties in the rationale of the atonement—a conception with which the present writer finds himself unable to agree.

The question of the method of salvation deserves a better answer than is commonly given to it; and certainly an answer that does not destroy the atonement. Indeed such an answer must be given, if the evangelical faith is to stand, if our rational hold on the grounds of salvation is to be maintained, and if we are to strengthen the faith of others. It cannot be, that that Cross which is declared to be "the wisdom of God," will not commend itself as wise in the method of its working, as well as effective in power, to a spiritually taught insight. The way of salvation must be supremely rational. Customary as it is for many to say that they

have "no theory" of the atonement, yet all men who think about it at all, do have some theory, whether they intelligibly define it or not. This habit of speaking of having "no theory" on the subject, while holding to the saving value in the fact of Christ's death, is the fashion of the hour. Sometimes it would appear to be an unoffending way of bowing out of the court elements embraced in a Bible view of the subject which some hesitate to acknowledge, and yet which they do not quite have the frankness to disclaim. Doubtless some are in suspense what to believe.

In the following pages I shall attempt an answer to the question, "How does the death of Christ save us?" The difficulty in the case is to show the ethical energy resident in Christ's death as it takes effect upon us: to show how the work accomplished in the death of Christ is so related to sin—to our sin—as to become effective to our salvation: so as to engender motive and impart dynamic to ultimate holiness of life.

Doubtless to most Bible-believing Christians, it is enough that the Bible teaches, as assuredly it does, that the death of Christ in some way saves. Such do not care to go behind the simple fact. For them, unvexed by speculative questions, this may be well. In the case of others, however, in whom doubts have arisen, and who yearn for a definite intellectual basis for their belief, it is important that the grounds in a matter so central be pointed out.

While none can hope fully to explain the relation of an event so transcendent as the death of Christ to human salvation, yet we believe that it can be so cleared of some confusions that have attached themselves to it, as greatly to simplify the matter. Souls earnest and thoughtful enough to raise the question deserve all the help possible to its answer; while any hesitation to attempt that answer, on the part of one interrogated, both betrays feebleness of grasp on the realities of salvation and causes the weak to stumble.

At the very root of the difficulty implied

in the question is a confused understanding of the terms employed. Neither what the death is, nor what "save" means is clear. The term "save," or salvation, first needs to be explained. Salvation may signify the work of justification merely, wherein we are forgiven through the redemptive sacrifice of Christ; it may mean salvation in the more vital sense of a renewed inner life; or it may comprehend the full fact of salvation, embracing that of body, soul, and spirit, the full life-career, and the renewal of the cosmos, of which we form a part from our creation to the final consummation. Salvation is a large word. It implies being recovered from certain lower relations and being instated in certain other and higher relations. It is a question also of personal relationship to other personalities in this universe—personalities divine, human, and satanic.

At this point, therefore, it is important to clear understanding, that we should speak of that initial salvation which on the ground

of Christ's death is embraced in the provision for the forgiveness of sin.

II

The Salvation Embraced in the Forgiveness of Sin

FROM the beginning of the Christian era, the death of Christ has been believed to be fundamentally related to the moral possibility of justification and forgiveness of sin on the part of a holy God. Throughout the Scriptures this is also uniformly implied. The death of Christ has never been taught by representative evangelicals to be necessary to secure a disposition in God to save, that is, to make God willing to save. It is rather because of deep willingness eternal in the very nature of God, that he provided to give his Son so that he might righteously forgive.

The moment we see this in God, another step in thought easily follows; namely this,

that the atonement death as timeless in God's heart and purpose, rendered divine forgiveness a potential reality, even antecedent to man's experience of it. Of course, this forgiveness could not go into effect or become a conscious realization in any until believed and voluntarily appropriated. From God's point of view, however, every sinner in principle—in his moral status—is forgiven from the beginning, and the basis of the fact is, that God, in Christ from eternity himself became responsible for the foreknown sin of man whom he was to create. An amnesty was proclaimed, like that at the close of the Sepoy rebellion in India, or like that at the end of our late Civil War, in which the government promised a full and free pardon in advance of the cessation of opposition to the government's authority. On account of God's work in Christ he provided, and in various ways proclaimed pardon for all who would receive it. In this view the world is a forgiven world, whether it knows it or not.

Alas, in large part it does not know it, and where it knows it it is slow to believe it. Yet it is forgiven in such a way as in the end impliedly commits it to subjective personal holiness. For in justification the believer is treated as righteous, as Doctor DuBose has said, "Not on the ground of being righteous, but on the ground of a certain relation of faith to Christ's righteousness upon which is laid the chief emphasis in St. Paul's system." And to quote Prof. Ernest D. Burton, "Such faith in itself is incipient and germinal righteousness, since it is God's will that man shall exercise faith toward him; it contained also the promise and potency of complete and actual righteousness, since it is the opening of the soul to God, through which God enters never to depart, and never to give over his work until it is complete." Doubtless, the implied commitment of the justified one to a sanctified life, is the chief reason why mankind is so slow to accept forgiveness and especially to seek it. Evangelical justification, which indeed

is a deeper matter than mere forgiveness, has for its corollary a new voluntary sanctification. Such a sanctification (whether it be considered as a judicial setting apart to be the obedient subject of Christ, or a progressive process of conformity to the will of Christ) is impliedly to be entered upon in the spirit of self-renunciation to Christ, the master of the ransomed life.

Such a cost many are unwilling to pay. Yet this cost in a life of self-crucifixion and chastening is the only hope man has for undoing the mischief of his sin, and regaining the new spontaneous righteousness, which the Holy Spirit yearns to make possible within him. "And every man that hath this hope set on him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3 : 3). Thus upon the divine side, the atonement bore upon God's being first, long before it ever took effect upon any man, to bring him on his own side, into personal at-one-ment with God. God on his own behalf made propitiation—though not in the pagan sense of that

term—to himself, in a self-consistent way, and proclaimed abroad his universal amnesty. He himself through self-sacrifice removed all the disabilities on his own part to the salvation of man. The justification and forgiveness then are based upon God's own act in that unique death of himself in Christ which he tasted.

It has been a great misfortune to the cause of evangelical truth that in that class of representations made, for example, in Edwards' famous sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," a distinction was not made between God's state of being as a whole, and a mere relation of that being on one side of it, that which is offended by man's sin. Edwards depicts in a purely one-sided way the manner in which because of his sin, man stands exposed to the perils of retribution, a retribution most luridly described. He says that nothing but "the arbitrary will of God," "His sovereign pleasure restrained by no obligation," stands between God and the sinner's instant sliding

into hell. In a certain aspect of Edwards' thought he is correct, namely in this respect: that so far as the bearing on sinners of the relation of holiness alone in God is concerned, judgment must be conceived as impending. If that were all there is in God, Edwards would have been justified in his position. But that is not all there is in God. Edwards, in that famous sermon, whatever his motive for it was, left out of view an important part of God. There is another relation in God, namely, his divine graciousness, which is just as real as his holiness. In this relation God himself has become responsible for man's sin and guilt. This being so, sinners are just as truly in the hands of the eternally gracious God; and every soul under the merciful ægis of his potential redemption is momentarily privileged if he will, to fall into the bosom of God, and become a saved being. What holds back the sinner from perdition is not mere "arbitrary will" in God, but the gracious restraints of clemency and long-suffer-

ing endurance, which have so profoundly expressed themselves in the work of Christ's cross. With measureless long-suffering, God waits for the sinner to respond to that. At this point the sacrificial work of God-in-Christ¹ enters, constraining as well as making consistent and possible salvation. It is here that the cross of Christ, in an important respect, becomes the reconciliation—the reconciliation of variant relationships in God, which Edwards' sermon fails to bring out. It is here also, that in a deep sense, there is effected, personally, a reconciliation between God and the sinner. It is here that judgment needs to be expressed, and is expressed, so that the conscience of the penitent sinner may find rest. So judgment here also becomes grace, the only grace the Bible promises; and this is salvation.

In this work of Christ's cross, God shows his righteousness (Rom. 3 : 25). He condemns sin, shows that he is not indifferent

¹ It will be observed that throughout this discussion every aspect of the saving work of Christ is represented as the work of God-in-Christ.

to sin—does not legitimize sin—rescues the sinner, and upholds the majesty of the divine law. In order then that the state of God's whole being, as opposed to a mere relation in God, may appear, he needs to be seen indeed in his relation to the just condemnation of sin, but also in the exhibition of his supreme graciousness, and in the sacrificial work of his cross, wherein the reconciliation of things antagonistic is effected.

Such a synthesis of relations is necessary in thought, in order that we may grasp the kind of God we have, and the kind of a moral order under which we live. This is a potentially redeemed universe. This world, since the work of Christ has been enacted in it, is a forgiven world, so far at least as God is concerned. But the world needs to know it, to know also the grounds on which it has become such; and it needs to be brought under its spell. Coming under this spell, it shortly realizes not only the fact that it is saved, but also how it is saved; and it can give an intelligent account of it.

In this light the question, "How can the death of Christ save?" becomes equivalent to the question, "How can God be a sacrificial God, a loving God, in the deep sense that he can deal savingly with our sin and guilt? There are no greater intrinsic difficulties in thus thinking of God as self-sacrificing, than in thinking of God as creative, or as existing in any other way. Besides, a sacrificial God is exactly the kind of God that appeals to our need and hope. If God can be at all, he can if he will be a sacrificial being, can incarnate himself in his Son, can endure atoning suffering, and to save us. "Yea, Father, for so it was pleasing in thy sight" (Matt. 11 : 26).

Of course it would be vain to talk of salvation in any further sense, did we not first recognize that man as a transgressor can be righteously forgiven. This forgiveness is the first step in salvation, and is basal to all subsequent steps. It is here that the justification of the sinner on the grounds of Christ's atoning death, is directly related to

forgiveness, and *vice versa*. This great event of forgiveness as connected with God's justifying grace, is wholly God's act, an act predetermined as a judicial transaction, showing forth divine righteousness, and occurring "once for all" in the history of redemption. It presupposes a penitent response on man's part. At this point, and in this sense, salvation is entirely of grace: it stands a work by itself, alone in kind, a divine achievement.¹ Salvation, however, in this initial sense is but partial, if it stops there because, as Dr. W. P. DuBose in his remarkable discussion on the "Gospel according to St. Paul" has wisely said: "The response of the gospel to the human sense of actual sin and unattainable holiness is not the half grace of forgiveness, but the whole grace of redemption and deliverance."

It is a great moment in the life of the soul when it realizes salvation in the sense of forgiveness, when, as Doctor DuBose again says, "in one ecstatic sweep of vision, it beholds all

¹ See appendix A.

God become human, his own righteousness and life." It is such a moment of immediate crisis of thought that St. Paul was contemplating in his discussion of justification in the Epistle to the Romans that makes him appear at a certain stage and phase of his discussion to consider forgiveness alone as the whole gospel. And yet this was not the whole gospel in the thought of Paul. Salvation in the sense of justification and forgiveness has its corollaries, as we shall point out that we may see what is meant by salvation in its more composite and extended sense.

III

The Centrality of Christ's Death in Salvation

BUT if the Scriptures make plain that salvation is wholly a matter of grace, it is just as clear that in a broad understanding of the term, the death of Christ in Scripture is made the ground of that salvation.

Observe how explicit the affirmations are. At the beginning of his public ministry, at the cleansing of the temple, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple—referring to the temple of his body—and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2 : 19), indicating that even then his eye was clearly upon his coming death. Later, he explicitly says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 26 : 28). "The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (John 10 : 11). "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto myself," to which John adds the striking comment, "This he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die" (John 12 : 32). The consistency with which Christ was ever referring to his "hour," proves that his eye was steadily fixed upon his death, in some understanding of the word, as the proximate goal of his earthly life. True, Jesus in talking with his disciples nowhere entered upon any formal discussion of his death as aton-

ing; for the event was to be better explained after its enactment than before. Hence also, when in the light of Pentecost, its real place and importance were seen, then the apostles were prepared to dwell upon it understandingly, and to set it forth advisedly.

In the accounts given in the four Gospels, all written several decades after Pentecost, the evangelists together give more than one-fourth of the space to the narrative even of the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the many discourses of the Acts (a score or so of them), the resurrection is the central note. It is such because it was seen to be first, the seal of God's acceptance of the sacrificial death, even of "Him that was crucified"; and because secondly, it was seen to be the vital outcome of such a death as Jesus died.¹

In St. Paul's thought, throughout his Epistles, the saving power is always lodged in the Cross. Paul's gospel was "the word

¹ See appendix B.

of the cross" (2 Cor. 5 : 21). When he refers to the pre-crucifixion life of Christ, it is in order to lead up to his risen life—that life which sprang out of the atonement-dying and blossomed into resurrection, the life which Christ now lives at the right hand of God. This life it was which formed itself within the apostle, and continues to form itself in all believers, "the hope of glory." And this death of Christ, in the Scriptures, is always connected with salvation. He "died for our sins" (1 Cor. 14 : 3). "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by (or in) his life" (Rom. 5 : 10). It is by the blood of Christ, regarded as the symbol of the extremeness of his dying, that we are justified, and have "the remission of sins" (1 Cor. 14 : 3). In short, the death of Christ with its implications is the ground of all Paul's hopes as a Christian man, and the sum and substance of his message to the world.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews epitomizes the intent of the incarnation in this most explicit declaration: "That through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and might deliver all them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2 : 14, 15).

The Apocalypse, in what Dr. James M. Campbell has called "a flash-light view of the new age of kingly power about to open," exhibits at the very center of this kingdom, and on its throne "a Lamb standing as though he had been slain" (5 : 6), but who impliedly is alive again, and is now lion-like in kingly power. The whole company of those who have become members of that kingdom are described as "those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7 : 14).

Indeed, the fact, the principle, and the potency of the sacrificial work of God-in-Christ are so woven into the whole warp

and woof of the New Testament—aye, and of the Old also—that they cannot be taken out of either without destroying the fabric.

But there are deep reasons also why the death of Christ is so central a thing in Scripture. The death itself is of such a nature—it stands in such relation to the results to be effected—that its characteristic elements in themselves considered, are adapted to secure the reconstitution of the soul in God.

IV

The Nature of Christ's Death

IF we cannot be satisfied with a narrow view of salvation, neither can we justly entertain a crude and narrow conception of the death of Christ, which in the Scriptures is correlated with it. The nature of this death now needs to be shown, and its adequacy to the production of the moral result contemplated made clear. For so profound

an effect as salvation in the larger sense there must be an adequate cause.

The notion commonly obtaining of Christ's death, is that it was mere mortal dying, the dissolution resulting from crucifixion wounds—such a death as any mere martyr might die under similar pains. If indeed this were all, or were main features in Christ's death, we should not wonder that men have failed to see an ethical bearing of such a death on ethical beings. One naturally asks, "How can the mortal dying of another individual outside one's self avail for his immortal salvation?" It is an attempt to relate a physical event to a spiritual state. There may be a nexus somewhere, but it is not obvious. The difficulty in such a conception, bears with special force against the sufficiency of the "Moral Influence View" of the atonement, as referred to before in the quotation of Doctor Campbell. He says of the view in question, "It does not show how the work of Christ is so related to sin as to be made effective to salva-

tion. It predicates an effect without an adequate cause."

But this objection is equally valid against any view of the atonement which assumes that the death of Christ was primarily his physical dying. And for aught that I can discover to the contrary, in his recent book, this would seem to be Doctor Campbell's own view of that death. Such a mere physical death could not have held within it a potency organically necessitating the resurrection; and therefore there could not be discernible in it any rational basis on which the ethical sense could predicate an ethical, causal relation between the death and the salvation. At any rate, the influence conveyed by the objective suffering of Jesus as thus conceived, would be impressional, and could only be sympathetically rather than vitally related to the beholder. On the supposition of the deeper death, which a little later we shall predicate of Jesus, we provide for organic, vital power in that death—a death of which Christ "could not be holden,"

which through its correlative resurrection has the power to reproduce its activities and energies in all on whom it lays hold. While in the first analysis this death is vicarious, it is also vital as well as ethical. For so profound an effect there is an adequate cause.

But the difficulty for some is even deeper than that expressed by Doctor Campbell. Some are unable to see any ethical connection between the tragical, criminal execution of Jesus at the hands of evil men and one's moral renewal. They reason, "No mere criminality can morally avail for another's redemption from sin; no martyr, however worthy, can be a Saviour, except as he may be a pattern for another in some similar crisis of his life." They see that Christ is a prophet, a teacher, even a leader, but not a Saviour. These difficulties are real ones, and they deserve candid consideration.

But on the part of those even, who have not felt their seriousness, we fear it has not been sufficiently recognized that the difficulties in question rest mainly upon errors in

fact as to the matter of the atonement-dying. It is important that this be pointed out. Otherwise the grave misconceptions which becloud popular belief and teaching on the subject will cause many thinking people to hold aloof or revolt from real Christianity.

What is really included in and meant by the death of Christ? On what we conceive that death to be everything turns. This death cannot be defined in a phrase or a sentence, because it was a death below death, a death with certain implications, such as never attached to any other death. It was a composite thing.

V

The Death Voluntary

AND first, this death was voluntary. "Therefore doth the Father love me because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power (or

right) to lay it down, and I have power (or right) to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father " (John 10 : 17, 18). Such language indicates that there was a divine free-will at work, even that of God-in-Christ, apart from all the crucifiers saw or intended. He indeed submitted himself through his self-emptying to the maltreatment of evil men, even to physical dying; and yet there was a point at which his death was independent of their action. " With a loud cry," we are told, " he yielded up his spirit," as Dr. Robertson Nicoll translates, " He sent away his spirit," he dismissed it. Yet this death was not suicide. A suicide thrusts himself unbidden before the time into the presence of Deity. A suicide has no right to take or to end his own life; and if he had he has no power to take it back again, and in higher relations than before. But Jesus declared that he had this right. He wrought no injury to others of his fellows, and no dishonor to God by so laying down his life. This form of dying

was as unique in its justification as it was in its nature; for it was Deity itself incarnate, moving to its proximate goal in the redemptive process for mankind; and so there was power to recover the sinful and the lost who had merited death, in a profound meaning of that term. The atonement-dying then was more than a tragedy. It was a death which was transacted, or came to its climax, behind the crucifixion, though simultaneously with it. It was a dying which none of the crucifiers saw, or could see, for it was infinitely deeper than their gaze. It could be appreciated only in the heavenlies; even the angels cannot sound it. It was an event which the contemplation of the redeemed in eternity will never exhaust.

The salvation of man involved the creation for him of a new redeemed status in the moral universe, what Dr. P. T. Forsyth has called "a judgment by God's grace become salvation." For the creation of this status, a causative power equal to the production of the result was necessary. This

causative power expressed itself in Christ's atonement-death. Now we cannot think of God as causing the crucifixion of Jesus, with all its attendant criminal phenomena, and thus releasing man from responsibility for it as a crime. This was the work of evil and brutal men.

When Jesus was presented to the crucifiers he was offered to them as their King; and they could have so accepted him if they would. But instead they said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him and take his inheritance" (Matt. 21 : 38). This was an expression of human sin at its worst; and for this the crucifiers were responsible: They "killed the Prince of Life" (Acts 3 : 15), and brought upon their nation the divine judgment. This murder was in no sense the divine act.

The causative power, however, that could effect the new moral status for mankind, requisite to salvation, must be able to deal adequately with all the elements in the situation. It must show the exceeding sinfulness

of sin; it must have regard to the majesty of God's holiness; it must show that he is not indifferent to sin—must "show his righteousness"; it must have power over the realm of moral evil and its prince; it must be able to overcome the evil causation between sin and its consequent doom, or death; it must be able to place the sinner in a recovered and gracious relation to the divine clemency; and it must have in itself the energy to bring man into a personal ethical relation to God as a renewed being. All this divinely atoning work, occurring behind the scenes of the crucifixion, the gracious and holy God only could effect. Such a work, moreover, comports with the meaning and results of that death of Christ which the Scriptures set forth. While the crucifixion-terms indeed are used in the New Testament in description of this event of the atonement, they must have an import deeper than appears upon their face. They are in part ironical, having a meaning quite the opposite of that which lies upon the sur-

face; as for example, when Paul speaks of glorying in the cross of Christ, he glories not in the crucifying of his divine Master, but in what the Lord was working out concomitantly with the crucifixion, and despite its shame. He was glorying in a divine work which turned the tables upon all the crucifiers intended. In the ultimate raising of the crucified from the dead, Christ proved that he had laid down his life in a death very different from that which his persecutors supposed he had died.

The cross indeed, as the symbol of shame, accentuated the depth of humiliation to which the Saviour went for us. Hence the profundity and appropriateness of its use as a symbol of redemption in the New Testament.

Now God's voluntariness in this atonement-dying, the moment it is perceived, creates a presumption of adaptedness to save, because it speaks of divine initiative; it asserts the reality and depth of a divine love that was timeless, and in spirit was

eternally atoning. He was ever in spirit delivering himself into those relations of voluntary endurance of that which he foreknew his Son must suffer. The Apostle Peter expressed it thus in his sermon on the day of Pentecost: "Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"—that is, delivered up into such relations to the sin-problem as he voluntarily assumed—"ye—the crucifiers—by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay."

When we see this positive factor at work behind the tragedy of the crucifixion, it touches our hearts; and it speaks of hidden moral power to reach our case and to accomplish our redemption. There is in all this at least a strong presumption of divine adaptedness, because of gracious causative power within it; and it awakens our faith in its potency.

VI

The Death More than Physical

THE death of Christ had in it the elements of something far deeper than physical dying. It of course had in it the pain of appreciating how virulent a thing sin is. It had in it something which implies such a sense of moral separateness from God, as we may believe characterizes the state of lost souls. How this could be, it may not be possible for us clearly to see; but its fact is surely implied in the Scriptures.

In so believing also, we get light on a problem which would be far darker if we took a shallower view. In some manner, in Christ's self-limitation, he chose to come vicariously into close quarters with the sin-problem of mankind. He drank even to its dregs, and alone, the wine cup of the divine displeasure against sin.

By this statement we do not mean to im-

ply that Christ suffered anything which the Father also did not share. We must reject the long-prevailing error that God is incapable of suffering. Considered in the harmonious relationships of his attributes, God is indeed the infinitely blessed One. But this world has been invaded by sin, and this has made a difference with God. Sin has afflicted God. And in this affliction he vicariously suffers for sinful men, rather than destroys them. If God can love, or if he is holy, he can suffer. Because he is infinitely holy and loving, and as such is in sensitive relations to his creatures, he is the supreme Sufferer in the universe. And God can appreciate all the moral equities; and in so doing suffers incalculably.¹ In this matter we do well to bear in mind, that when Christ is said to have suffered, this is only another way of saying that God-in-Christ suffered. When, therefore, we hear Jesus on the cross exclaiming, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

¹ See appendix C.

(Matt. 27:46) we are not to think that this is the cry of a strictly separate individual crying out to another separate individual, implying that one is estranged from the other, or is enduring an injustice from the other. It is not that the Father in stoical indifference or cruelty is inflicting a wrong upon his innocent Son. The situation is rather this: there is being made on the cross the expression of incongruities, as between Deity in his intrinsic holiness, and Deity in vicarious union with the guilty human race. The Trinity of the Bible is not divided against itself. But God in his essential holiness, and Deity in man's sinful place, suffer the awful sense of moral distance from each other. Nothing could be more paradoxical. Nothing, but for divine grace, could be more incongruous. God-in-Christ is undergoing the painful sense of abandonment to an experience which, but for the fact of his standing in the place of the sinner, would be utterly foreign to Deity. This is the one unique, solitary, and astounding

surprise in the whole history of the moral universe of Deity standing at the antipodes of Deity. This is the infinite divine tragedy.¹ Hence the exclamation "Why?" It was not that there was doubt as to the propriety, the wisdom, or moral necessity of this separateness; but the astonishing nature of it, fitly broke forth in this one absolutely unique hour, when the woe of God in the human tabernacle was undergoing its awful passion. That cry of Jesus expressed the sense of Godhood in saving union with man, being forsaken of Godhood in the essential purity which "cannot look upon sin." It expressed the passion of the divine heart engaged at such measureless cost in saving man. To greater depths of condescending love even Deity could not go. Yet to go to such a length of voluntary humiliation and conscious woe, the Scriptures say "became him" (Heb. 2 : 10). Nor could he do it without tasting for

¹ This was what Dr. P. T. Forsyth calls the "solemn and ordered crisis *within God himself.*"—*Italics mine. Positive Preaching and Modern Mind*, p. 300.

the time the bitterness of all that we conceive as involved in spiritual death. Accordingly, we do not hesitate to say, that in any proper estimate of what the Bible commends to us as the divine atonement for sin, the tasting of spiritual woe was at the very heart of it. There was a curse in it, and God-in-Christ in some dreadful way entered the atmosphere of that curse and died of it, as a miner sometimes dies of the choke of a death-damp in some deep subterranean chamber. Then he emerged the victor over sin and Satan. There was of course no sin in him to deserve the least he suffered, much less the worst. But by the depth of his knowledge, the fulness of his sympathy, and the largeness of his capacity of self-humiliation he grasped and endured in kind everything denoted by death—death of the body, death of the soul, and death of the spirit. He was in some mysterious but real way “made sin on our behalf” (2 Cor. 5 : 21). He was not only “a sin offering.” He was that indeed, but more. He became as it

were sin itself, treated himself as if he were sin, and in our sin's stead he died. There was a penal element in it, though it was not penalty in any mechanical, quantitative sense, any commercial sense of enduring so much pain for so much sin that Christ suffered.¹ The deep mystery of those travail-pains has been tenderly and beautifully described by Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall as "the lonely ecstasy of the divine Sufferer, whose tremendous love demands pain as the only available language through which to make its purpose understood."

A missionary of my acquaintance in the far East is living a life of extraordinary strenuousness in behalf of the pagan people whom he so loves. This strenuousness all who know him think excessive. Frequently a tender censure is expressed to him by even the brethren who love him most. In response to some remonstrances which I myself lately expressed to him, the missionary replied, "I really do not feel that I am ac-

¹ See appendix D.

completing anything for these poor people for whom I labor, unless I am at positive pain in my effort for them; going away beyond anything which the heathen, the native Christians, or my missionary brethren expect of me." Some would say there is morbidness in this. Possibly so; especially in the light by which we usually measure our ordinary human care for each other.

The divine-human Christ, however, exhibited the strenuousness of self-imposed pain for man's recovery from sin to the highest degree. In this at least there is nothing morbid. It was the right of sacrificial Deity thus to suffer if he would. "And apart from (such) shedding of blood, there is no remission" (Heb. 9 : 22). Its uniqueness is its divineness. While indeed, there is no need that the missionary referred to should essay to make another atonement for sin, God himself having provided "once for all" the all-sufficient Lamb for sacrifice, yet may not the missionary have attained to the position where he is filling up "that

which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ " (Col. 1 : 24), wherein he is "being conformed unto his death?" (Phil. 3 : 10). Such an attitude is at least essentially Godlike, and puts much of our own so-called Christian living to the blush. The spiritual death which we conceive Christ to have undergone was so dire a thing, that it resulted, as the evangelists warrant us in believing, in actual heart rupture, on the physical side. And even this heart rupture was only a faint symbol of the deeper and invisible heartbreak of the Infinite. In all this, spiritual and moral power was gathering—storing itself for dynamic, transforming effect upon men—as through the centuries they should gradually apprehend the depth of meaning in such a death. In suffering thus Christ made acknowledgment in his normal conscience—the only normal conscience the world has ever known—of what sin deserved; and in kind he tasted the penalty he acknowledged. He only knew what sin deserved, and in the practical acknowledgment of that desert he

became as Doctor Forsyth says, "the conscience of the conscience." That helps our conscience. We here have a conscience adequate to measure the whole situation, one we can trust, a conscience which is the deepest reality in the moral universe. The assurance born in our souls by the divine Spirit, consonant with the divine word, that Christ in his atoning work is thus "the conscience of the conscience," saves us from the most painful thing in human experience, the sense of guilt. If God-in-Christ self-moved, is thus minded to undertake to taste vicariously for me the elements of my doom, and from the foundation of things, has been so minded, why should I find fault with its ethics? At all events, it wondrously moves me to hate my sin and to sympathize with my God. So at this point also I know how, to a degree at least, the death of Christ saves me.

VII

The Death Involved the
Resurrection

THE death of Christ was also such a form of dying as logically and necessarily involved his living again on a higher plane, with enlarged and higher powers. These acquired powers were such as on any lower plane, even Christ himself, morally speaking, could not have exercised.

We have previously assumed that Christ's death implied his resurrection also. But the matter is so important, so essential to the particular difficulty we have set out to meet, that it requires special explication.

To think of the death of Christ as mere mortal dying is a sad narrowing, and so a real falsification of that death as the Scriptures view it. Christ's death is a death plus—plus all that is implied in the resurrection. In the fine discussion of the resurrection by Dr. A. P. Peabody, in his book, "Chris-

tianity and Science," he likens the supersession of the resurrection upon the death of Christ to the manner in which the phenomenon of the sun's rising on the verge of the Arctic Circle follows almost simultaneously its setting. He says, "Jesus (like the sun) just dips beneath the horizon, and lo! from the very twilight of his setting bursts the glorious dawn of the resurrection day." The resurrection was logically evolved from the very movement earthward and manward of the Sun of Righteousness. The analogy pressed a little further would suggest that the dawn is due to the energy of the spheres, whose course is from of old, rejoicing "as a strong man to run a race."

The voluntariness, the persistency, and energy of this death-resurrection movement, may be compared to the force of gravity, which moves sun, earth, and stars in their courses; whereas the criminal violence shown in the crucifixion may be likened to the puny attempt of some demented spirit to explode the sun by hurling dynamite at it.

The resurrection was the proximate goal of the cross, predetermined in the heavens, albeit the crucifiers knew not nor cared for any such thing.

Three times in the earthly life of Jesus his gospel was authenticated by the Father's voice right out of the blue, as once before the law of Sinai was authenticated. These three occasions were at the Jordan baptism, on the transfiguration mount, and at the time of the visit of the Greeks, near the end of his earthly course. Now it is of vast significance that on each of these occasions he was in some form accentuating his own death, but in such a form as involved his living again on a higher plane.

At the Jordan Jesus was enacting the sign in symbolic death and resurrection of what he actually was in his own person, the approved Son of man, the "second Adam," immortal in his victory over sin and death. Hence the voice of the Father, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Mark I : II).

On the mount of Transfiguration the Father was signaling the message the apostles were to use for morally transfiguring the world. Hence the injunction, "Hear ye him," was added to the prior utterance, "This is my Son, my chosen" (Luke 9 : 35). That is, hear him on the theme of his converse with Moses and Elias—the theme of his death (literally, his "exodus"), his passing through the Red Sea of his voluntary dying to emerge in resurrection on the Canaan side of the flood. So hear ye him, respecting the import of this death-resurrection, that ye will gather from it power for your task of morally transfiguring mankind, as you go on to build on my foundations—the foundations laid in my "exodus," the passing of my Red Sea.

On the occasion of the visit of the Greeks, Jesus was impressing his disciples that, if as his successors they would effectively evangelize the Gentile world of which these visiting Greeks were the precursors, they must

live out their lives on the same principles on which he lived his; that is, by a species of dying and living again. Hence the emphasis throughout this extended homily on the death and resurrection principle in various forms (John 12 : 24-36).

In the thought of the New Testament, the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ always mutually imply each other. The atonement is causative of the resurrection; and the resurrection presupposes the atonement. These two stand or fall together. But the moment this is seen, the uniqueness of the death of Christ flashes upon us, and is ever after to us a different thing.

On the occasion just referred to, when the Greeks came to Jesus desiring to see him—to divine his secret—he answered, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit” (John 12 : 24). In the use of this figure, Jesus represented that the key to all that he was, and all he

would work, was expressed in the principle of his death considered as a planting, rather than as a mere burial. Burial implies corruption. Planting looks forward to harvest. The living again in the form which attends the sowing of seed-corn was the underlying concept.

A little later, in harmony with the same idea and in full view of his cross, Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world—the crisis of all crises—now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12 : 31). He thus spoke of such a turning of the tables on his arch enemy, who up to the time of his crucifixion supposed he was casting out the Lord Christ, because beyond his death, and conditioned by his death, Christ saw his own triumphant rising again. It was in such a power that he expected to overcome all his apparent defeats. On the same occasion the Saviour said, "And if I be lifted up from the earth"—by this expression meaning, "lifted up out of the earth on to resurrection

ground"—"will draw all unto myself" (John 12 : 32). The next expression justifies the conception we are expounding: "But this he said, signifying by what *manner* of death he should die" (ver. 33). A death issuing in resurrection is plainly implied. The "*manner* of death" of which Christ spoke was a death destined to shoot forth into higher, diviner life according to the design of the planter. In this respect, it was an entirely unique kind of death.

That this utterance had conveyed some such impression even to the multitude that stood about, is evident from the query which they threw out, "We have heard out of the law, that the Christ abideth forever, and how sayest thou, that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" (Ver. 34.) The answer of course is, that the death of the Son of man—the second Adam—was more than the lifting up on a tree, more than a crucifixion. It was a consummation resulting in a glorified life. The lifting up was not finality, but only a half-

way house to the divinest of all ultimates. It was the perception of that ultimate that broke into the words of the dying penitent malefactor—the one faith-filled expression of all the utterances at the cross. This man did not say to Jesus “Save thyself.” He did say, virtually, “Save me!” He used in faith the saving name. And he said, “Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom” (Luke 23 : 42). This was the kingdom which he saw was awaiting the rising Lord beyond his cross. This penitent, and he alone, saw the atoning death as deeper than the tragedy. No wonder Jesus rejoicingly replied, “Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23 : 43). In perfect keeping with this perception of the real nature of the Lord’s death, was Peter’s declaration in his sermon at Pentecost, when with profound spiritual insight he perceived, and then exclaimed, “For it was not possible that he should be holden of death” (Acts 2 : 24). The apostle clearly saw that such

a person as the sinless divine-human Christ, the Messiah of prophecy—that prophecy which foreannounced the resurrection glory of Christ as plainly as it did his sacrificial dying—that he who by his death had mastered death, could not be a victim of death as mere sinful mortals are.

It was in order to awaken a similar appreciation in those who walked with Jesus on the way to Emmaus, that in a burst of warranted surprise and reproof, Jesus exclaimed, “O foolish men—men destitute of that higher reason, consonant with true biblical insight—and slow of heart to believe in all the prophets have spoken, behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? and beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24 : 25, 27) ; that is, the things concerning himself on that subject: “the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them” (1 Peter 1 : 11). It was

morally impossible for Christ "to enter into his glory" except through dying, except through his peculiar kind of dying, one involving resurrection as a peculiar attestation of the real atonement-death.

In Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, he represents the Saviour as saying to his disciples, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11 : 26). But it is not a mere death that is proclaimed, or that is contemplated. It is a misfortune that many persons in the life-habit of their minds at the Lord's table, think of this table as funereal, mainly occupied with death and mortality. By such persons the table is morbidly viewed, and some absent themselves from it on that account. Most properly there is an element of deep solemnity in that ordinance. On another side of it, however, the commemoration is to be viewed as anything but funereal. It is a festival. It was instituted in lieu of the feast of Passover.

At this new festival our Lord twice "gave thanks"; and we eat the bread and drink the wine symbolic of refreshment and exhilaration. This feast concluded with a hallel, or hymn of praise, in the spirit of which "they went out," to service and to conquest. It is ever the trysting-place of the believer with his divine Lover, the banqueting-room where the disciple feasts with his Lord, with whom as such he has great delight, while he is also sobered by the reflection on the vast cost at which this fellowship was purchased. It is precisely at this point that the atonement-death as often as it is properly contemplated, becomes searchingly ethical. Failing of this, the observance becomes a sacrilege, and the participant "eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the body"—the body incarnate, the body atoning, the body mystical, and the risen body of believers with whom the communicant is corporately united.

Moreover, this memorial proclaims that

Christ who is remembered as once dead, is now alive, and in the logical order, about to come again, "apart from sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9 : 28). Now the moment we see the death of Christ pass into this unique glory, we take new heart. There is for us a power of God unto salvation, working mightily for us in the moral universe, as well as working mightily within us, "both to will and work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2 : 13). The death thus passed into life (because by the Spirit of God a new quickening energy has entered us) is seen to raise us from death in trespasses and sins.

Jesus in the visions of John in the Revelation is represented as saying, while he laid his right hand upon the seer, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold! I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of hades" (Rev. 1 : 18). So with a proper view of the relation of Christ's death to its sequel, his resurrection, and of both to ourselves, we in our turn may feel the power

of the Saviour's hand upon us ; and we may hear him say unto us " Fear not " ; and we may become certain that the keys of his authority are prevailing to open up to us all privilege, power, and blessing.

The resurrection implies something far deeper than triumph over physical death. It was fundamentally a moral victory. This matter of the resurrection has often been too narrowly viewed, with undue emphasis on the physical or material side. Christ himself, as well as his apostles, regarded his resurrection as primarily a moral achievement, while it embraced the physical change also. Christ's resurrection is a most unique and unparalleled event in this respect. His own character and the mastery also of the sin problem were the guarantee of this sort of spiritual triumph over death ; and these two facts—his character and his rising again—afford grounds for the credibility and trustworthiness of the New Testament accounts of the supernaturalism in the life of Jesus in all its forms. Says one, " No

denial of the possibility of miracle, however dogmatic, even though it bore the imprimatur of the most renowned scientists of the world, can explain away this sentence of Christ, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28 : 20). This promise was spoken by the risen Lord to enforce the execution of the resurrection errand committed to the church; namely, the errand of evangelizing the whole world. The basis of Christ's confidence that this stupendous task was practicable, was his confidence in the fact of the resurrection in its totality, when once it should be understood, as primarily a moral achievement—an achievement which dealt with the whole sin-situation of the world. This was a matter vastly deeper than the quickening of Christ's flesh. Accordingly, the appearances of Christ in the ten epiphanies following upon the resurrection, were indeed so materialized in form, "so objective as to be apprehensible to the senses," yet withal so ethereal at their base as to give the "domi-

nant impression that he was and is forevermore an all-conquering spirit." In his resurrection spiritual and material death was potentially overcome, mortality was swallowed up. His rising was not, as Dr. O. O. Fletcher, from whom we have just quoted, has further well said, "A temporal reversal of the laws of death, but a permanent supersession of them."

"It is common," argues Doctor Fletcher,¹ substantially, "in these days, for disciples of the Neo-Hegelian philosophy to deny that a universal and eternal religion can be linked to a historical event in time. We might concede this if such a representation covered the whole case; but the situation is far otherwise. Back of Christ's rising from the dead, and perfectly congruous with it, is the reality of his sinless self-consciousness. And this reality puts him far above the rank of a mere 'historical personage.'"

Through the moral achievement of the

¹ In a remarkable essay entitled "The Resurrection in the Light of Modern Science," published at Chicopee, Mass.

resurrection, especially, Christ reaches an unequaled height. He thereby becomes a super-historical personage; and as such he is "eternal in life and universal in power." He is "the same yesterday and to-day, yea and forever" (Heb. 13 : 8). In such a light we better see how the whole work of Christ in death and life works to save us.¹

¹ Elsewhere, in my book entitled "The Meaning and Message of the Cross," I have explicitly shown how the cross with its implied resurrection, works in the spiritual universe as a moral achievement; and I need not here repeat the details of that argument. I may, however, be permitted to enumerate the four respects at least in which I conceive Christ's atonement objectively achieved something profoundly potential in the moral world, which makes for man's recovery from sin. The death of Christ as I view it, (1) acknowledged the fact that the sin-principle, or the collective evil of mankind, had merited death; that that evil must eventuate in death in the direst sense, and then in principle Christ tasted that death judicially for us. (2) That Christ's death by the very attitude in which he bore himself to the cross, despite all the temptations to the contrary, "non-suited" in the court, so to speak, of the moral universe, the devil, his adversary and ours. Christ, therefore, instead of being himself cast out, cast him and his false philosophy as a fatal power out of the moral world. Christ thus potentially destroyed Satan, gave him his death-blow. (3) Still further, Christ by his voluntary devotion of himself for our sins, potentially overcame the fatal causation between our sin and our death, or spiritual doom. Thus he introduced a new causation of supernatural grace. And yet more, (4) Through this gracious redeeming transaction, of himself in Christ,

VIII

**The Death Involved the Ascension
and Divine Enduement
of Power**

SO long as the death of Christ is conceived as a mere episode in the life-course of Jesus, standing apart from his whole presence and career, it is of course difficult to perceive the connection between such a death and the salvation contemplated.

God adjudged all mankind to be Christ's own beloved and ransomed possession; and thus heaven itself has more interest in our salvation than we ourselves have. I maintain in short that in the thought of Scripture, and by the very moral necessities of the case in an achievement of this kind, wrought in the universe, this death of Christ, viewed as a whole, was what Dr. P. T. Forsyth has fitly termed it, a "judgment-death"; that is, the accomplishment of Christ on his cross so went to the ultimate realities in the moral universe of all that sin had brought into it, that this redemption through the cross, was a microcosm or anticipation of the final judgment, and all its mighty issues. Every charge that can ever rise against us was at the cross met and answered. We can therefore look forward to that day with boldness and not with fear. Through these ways, the grounds on which and the processes by which the death of Christ saves us, are disclosed, and they are seen to belong to the very nature of things in a universe which is potentially redeemed.

As we have previously stated, the death of Christ was a death with implications. Several of these we have named. We now come to another, organically connected with the voluntary laying down of the Saviour's life. This Christ who died not only rose from the dead, but after a period of forty days, also ascended, "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come" (Eph. 1 : 21). As there seated, Christ has become the divine-human intercessor in our behalf. But Christ is not an intercessor in any such sense as implies that he is a separate third party, brought in from without, to stand between an irritated Deity and the victims of his wrath. Christ's intercession is rather the extension of the efficacy of the atoning-death. In this work he is in entire accord with the Father, dealing with the high moral relations as between Deity and humanity, at the point where sin had threatened all.

The intercession represents the principle of mediation, as between, not different persons, but different moral forces in the universe which were at variance. This intercession had to do, not with the disposition of God, but rather with the harmonious and self-consistent action of God in the work of saving from the multiplied potencies of sin. It had respect to ultimate harmonies and relations in the entire spiritual realm. It implied that so long as the ascended Christ, in the entirety of the act of his sacrificial work, is at the right hand of the Father—the place of privilege and power—nothing can ever go back of or disturb the moral equities there represented for repentant souls. This work evermore avails for us. If the intercessory prayer of our Lord in the seventeenth chapter of John be carefully studied it will be seen how completely Jesus identifies all he contemplated, with the Father's original will. "They know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee" (ver. 7).

“That they may be one, even as we are” (ver. 22). Apart from the Father, Jesus never did one original thing. “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing” (John 5 : 19).

How certain then it is that in the mediation of Christ, he deals with moral relations—relations which concern moral equities as between God and man—rather than with mere dispositions; with moral consistencies and not with tempers.

But more than this. Christ as ascended has “received gifts” of the divine Spirit for us, the purchase of his redemption. “When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some to be apostles; and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering unto the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4 : 8-12). From this point of view the efficacy of the death of Christ shows itself in communications of power and grace,

through the Holy Spirit, in a thousand forms in the working energies of the church.

Looked at in another aspect this work of Christ as ascended, expresses itself in creating here on earth through the Holy Spirit a new atmosphere, or element, spiritually magnetic with his own risen power.

Marconi and his collaborators have demonstrated that the atmosphere which envelops our earth is charged with an electric fluid through which a machine may transmit a current to another instrument attuned to receive it on the opposite side of the ocean. Newfoundland to-day is sending business messages to Ireland as freely as Boston sends them to New York. These wondrous things are possible because of the existence in some mysterious way of this vast circumambient ether or field of magnetic force, so susceptible to the passing of a current of thought from one point to another even through the air. It is expected that shortly some form of power will also be transmissible through the ether.

In some such way, through the endowment which came at Pentecost, the whole atmosphere in which we dwell spiritually, has been charged with a peculiar energy; it has been endued with a new susceptibility. Since then, so long as we are attuned to the spirit of the risen, living Christ who is at the right hand of the Father, and who through his own divine work has become so attuned to us, we may live in the most intimate relation to his grace and power. We can in every activity of life do and achieve what otherwise would have been impossible to us.

An illustration such as this may help us to understand the marvelous significance of Pentecost. Pentecost accentuated the fact that since Christ's atoning death was accepted in heaven, Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit to the disciples: "Behold, I send forth the promise of the Father upon you!" (Luke 24 : 49) was being fulfilled. The gift of the Spirit is not to be adequately thought of as something bestowed in an

episodal, sporadic way. Previously to Pentecost, the Spirit indeed came upon individuals and even companies of men for particular purposes in the way of an affusion or in the communication of a particular gift or grace. But the condition and manner of this power are more clearly disclosed in the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

The coming of the Spirit on that day signified that the atoning, risen, interceding Christ was now become dynamic—logically so—for the church in a new way; namely, in the creation for the church of an all-encompassing element in which it could exercise its life—an element as necessary to the soul as atmosphere is to the lungs, or water to the fish. While the Holy Spirit is ever a person, he also has a mode of his being as an element, or divine ether, of which we may properly speak, as “it” as well as “he.” In the Acts the Holy Spirit is referred to in both ways, according as the Greek article is used or not. In the element of this invisible but real divine ether, since

Pentecost, the church was expected henceforth to live its life and perform its functions. Moreover, according as the church does reckon on this power in the habit of its new life, will it realize the divine enduement of power, intended for the effective service of Christ, in each generation, until he comes again. In this "field of force," the believer becomes conscious not of the Spirit (who is pleased to conceal himself), but of Christ (whom it delights the Spirit to reveal), and of his own union with him. This union is organic, vital, reconstructive. It is a mystical union. But it is none the less real on that account. It is the marriage of the bride to the bridegroom; the union of the member with the Head, in the new Adamic relation. And the potency of all this is in the death of Christ properly understood.

Since the Christ who died is alive again and is now exalted on the intercessory throne, he has become the new polarizing energy of mankind. He is the personalized dynamo in the moral universe, working

through a "field of force" which he himself has created. The situation thus constituted, in which mankind may live, move, and have its being, is as permanently charged with his potential and saving energy, as our physical universe is alive with electrical power, even though that strange fluid is wholly invisible to the eye. This moral and vital energy of the Christ is as available for us as the magnetic energy in the charged overhead wire is usable for the trolley car; all that is necessary is to keep the trolley in contact with the wire, and new divine movement is possible in our life.

Of course in principle and potency, this power was ever incipient for the race in God. It was constitutionally so. He was that kind of a God—an atoning, mediating, interceding, and indwelling God. The historical enactment of all this, however, was necessary, to render it concrete, pictorial, and apprehensible by us. Mankind is thus enabled the better to get hold of it.

When, therefore, the death of Christ extended and applied through this gift of Pentecost does lay hold on us, it works the profoundest changes. That power changed Peter and his companions into different men, and so saved them in a larger sense than that in which they were saved before.

In the same way, the continued power implied as constant in the church since Pentecost passes into and empowers us; and thus also it saves us in a larger sense than we were saved before. It saves us out of weakness and ineffectiveness into Spirit-filled might, if we will but have it so.

II

The Death Implied a New Vital Union With Christ

FROM the beginning, the provision of salvation through the death of Christ was upon the presupposition that every believer in that death would become vitally and personally united with Christ. Salvation

through the death of Christ was thus never conceived in the divine thought as a mere artifice or trick of legalism. In so far as it has been made to appear such, in some narrow constructions of language in the New Testament, we may depend a deeper insight into that language with its implications, would dispel the illusion. The so-called "temporary thought-vehicles" of forensic representation, stand for some ultimate moral realities, in the nature of God, and in the nature of the moral universe. The principle of the mediation then involves something organic to Christ's person, to all the previous steps embraced in his dying and living again in glory; and organic also to all the members of his mystical body. It contemplates bringing them all subjectively into real unison.

It was but half the truth that men saw when they perceived the substitutionary bearing of the death of Christ on their salvation. Stopping there, the view of salvation was inadequate and mechanical; and

it was certain to fall into positive error, as partial inferences were drawn from so narrow a premise. The mechanically substitutionary idea failed to comprehend that the death of Christ was vicarious in such a sense as committed the believer to holiness of living, rather than sanctioned a release from beholdenness to moral law. It does release us from the bondage of guilt and condemnation. This death, however, was such a death that when in its whole fact and energy it comes to exercise itself, it provides the dynamic needed to enter into the believer, and empowers him to live the new life to which the death of Christ has committed him.

In the great utterances of the Apostle Paul, in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, this is set forth with the greatest clearness and force. The apostle shows how the energy of the Christ who was crucified, is risen, and now reigns above, through the might of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ

Jesus" (Rom. 8 : 2), becomes inwardly a power for righteousness in the believer. Says Doctor DuBose, " All the reality in the universe can be no gospel to us as long as it remains objective, or until it enters into living relations to ourselves." To the invalidity of this objectiveness we agree if by objective is meant exclusively objective.

There is undoubtedly a subjective side in the saving work for men; but it is often overlooked that in order to the awakening of the right subjective attitude in the soul, the outer objective facts of Christ's atoning work need to be definitely seen and felt. If it is true that even the Holiest cannot forgive by a mere act of the will, without making cost to himself, it is also true that one cannot receive forgiveness without an antecedent preparation of mind, and even a unique movement of the forgiver upon one's heart. There are difficulties to be overcome in the subjective soul in order to effect a real forgiveness and conversion. If one is to be truly and wisely forgiven, it must be

under such conditions as make it difficult to repeat the sin. Nay, more; a forgiveness that has value presupposes that an actual moral revolt from the sin forgiven has occurred. One who is the subject of a real evangelical repentance discovers, to his horror, that he has brought the judgment due to his sin upon another—that the logical and actual outcome of his sin in its ultimate crisis really crucified the Lord of Glory. To repent truly, which is not an easy matter, is to discern this, that there is a divine care, even to the endurance of sin's judgment, which still follows after the soul (even though it has killed the Prince of Life), with desire to recover and pardon it; that this forgiveness is offered even at the expense of the divine heart-break. The moment this is seen there results a change of care respecting continuance in sin. The bearing of one's sin upon God is seen and a profound revolt against it is awakened. Thus true repentance is grounded in the objective power of Christ's death.

In order to realize the divine love also, which is most fundamental in the soul's renewal, and which is to prove the staying power in all subsequent life of the Christian, the profound objective in Christ's sacrificial work needs to be seen. Now the divine love is not mere clemency in God, not mere amiability. God's love in order to secure our trust must be a holy love. Christ's Father was a "holy Father." The divine love must deal with sin and guilt; in order to do this, either to divine or human satisfaction, this love must include in its own internal necessity a fit judgment on sin as an accomplished moral fact in the divine government. This love is revealed on the background of a proper judgment executed against the whole sin-principle; a love which did not go to the depths like this would be superficial and even immoral.

Still further, the perception of the objective sacrificial work of Christ as the accepted provision on the part of God himself of a dire judgment upon the sin-principle

must ever be the basis of a restful faith. The sinner, naturally both timid and suspicious respecting God, is helped by knowing that God-in-Christ has met and answered his full guilt. There is then no danger that some unexplored remainder of his guilt may some day return in judgment upon him. Christ and he alone was able to measure to the full the due judgment which belonged to our sin. Since he with infinite knowledge and sympathy has measured and satisfied it, we are enabled to trust and rest. Thus the objective and subjective aspects of salvation are really correlative; each stands or falls with the other. Thus again it is better seen how the death of Christ savingly affects us.

The real Bible conception of the atonement-death of Christ was never narrowly or solely substitutionary and objective and, as such, built on any "forensic fiction": it was a death archetypal also to our own death to sin and resurrection to newness of life. The Bible view throughout has ever been

vicario-vital. Leave out the vital element—the very point at which the substitutionary work passes into subjective power—and you have emasculated the Bible view of the atonement. You have emptied the death of Christ of its intrinsic and distinctive quality and meaning, as well as of its predestined power to reconstitute the soul in righteousness and true holiness. On such perverted data, of course, no one can show how the death of Christ saves any one.

Let the death of Christ, however, be conceived as *vicario-vital* in its bearings and implications, and all is changed. The rationale of its power over men is then quite another matter.

This *vicario-vital* characteristic of the atonement may be illustrated by the working of the principle in the relationship of motherhood to offspring. In human motherhood, the mother prior to the birth of her infant vicariously bears its life in a way of which the child is long unconscious, and for which it is irresponsible. The infant as yet

has no independent life. That life, in the exercise of the vital functions of the mother, is lived vicariously, although the germ of an independent life is there. After the birth of the child into the world, the mother for a long period still vicariously bears her child's limitations, weaknesses, and sicknesses, the incipient individual life meanwhile gaining in vigor.

By and by the child attains to its majority, and its personal life becomes mature, so mature that it almost forgets it was ever dependent on a life and care and suffering anterior to its own. The vicarious element now recedes into the background while the personal vital element comes more prominently to the front. None, however, knows so well as the mother how dependent throughout this life had been on her own vicarious, substitutionary love. The child may forget, but the mother never.

Even so it is in the working of the substitutionary death of Christ. At the beginning everything starts in the vicarious realm of

God's parental and redemptive love. Later, the personal, subjective life awakes to its own self-consciousness. Later still, the separate life of the believer becomes more and more conscious of its independent self-hood. But even then the love and grace which are constitutionally in the vicarious divine principle, by a subtle alchemy, keep passing into the new vitalized personality of the child. One may indeed reach a place where he imagines the vicarious initiative was never a reality in his personal history; and he even may disown it outright. A generation of persons, careless of Christian truth, has been known to live on the moral momentum derived from its evangelical forebears. In such case denials of worthy ancestral life are as pitiable as they are superficial. A reverent conception of the *vicario-vital* nature of the Saviour's death, as the Scriptures present it, would save from mechanical narrowness, on the one hand, and from supercilious and arrogant latitudinarianism on the other.



The Death Implied the Renewal of the Cosmos

THE death or dying of Christ involved also the renewal of the cosmos; and that vitally concerns us. Our salvation will not be complete until the redemption of the body, as well as the soul, is accomplished. And this can never be until creation as a whole has its second birth.

“But now we see, not yet, all things subjected to him.” “But we do behold Jesus because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2 : 8, 9). This is the pledge that when this process is complete, all things will be put under him. That victory carries ours with it. In the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle says: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the creation

was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And not only so, but "ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8 : 20, 23).

Then this redemption of the body will not be accomplished by itself alone. Neither will the cosmical universe be delivered out of its travail pains alone. There is a corporate unity between us and the created universe; even between the mortal body of every one of us and the cosmos. In the historic fall of Eden the whole cosmos shared. As a unity it went down together. In a unity, also, it will at length be brought to its new birth. There will yet be "a new heaven and a new earth." The Captain or arche-

type of our salvation has been perfected, or consummated, through sufferings; and in this we have the pledge or earnest that in due course we also shall be consummated with him. "That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2 : 7).

Jesus as glorified is the corporate new Head, not only of all believers, but of the whole cosmos also. And we are to be "like him" (1 John 3 : 2). He declared that if he were to be uplifted out of the earth through his atoning death on to resurrection ground, he would "draw all"—that is, all things—unto himself. He would become the new personal center, or nucleus, to whom the now groaning universe will radically relate itself for transfiguration, or deeper reprobation. In the Revelation Jesus is represented as saying: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21 : 5). The full salvation of men then involves being delivered into "the glorious liberty" of

environment, as well as of personal being. In such a salvation of the cosmos we shall find our coronation. Christ's death was intended to swallow up death, death in every form—the death which fills creation with sobs and heartbreaks, the death which brings pain and blight to plant and animal life, the death which has filled the earth with venoms, thorns, and thistles—all that has made “creation red in tooth and claw,” and armed it against the man of Eden. Man can never come to his own, until once again he shall have dominion over every hostile and malicious earthly thing; not until “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.” Nay, not until the very morning stars shall again sing together in unison with their glorified Lord.

While now, man for a season is abased and “made a little lower than the angels,” he is yet as the exhibition of God's highest

glory to be "set above the heavens." He is to be "crowned with glory and honor" (Ps. 8), and to be set above all the work of God's hands. Redemptive works, the work of God's heart, are unspeakably greater than creative works, the work of his hand.

Now the potent energy to work all this transformation and glorification is the death of Christ extending itself to the whole cosmos. This from the beginning was purposed in the Lamb "foreknown indeed (as slain), before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times" (1 Peter 1:20). This is the death which has "abolished death." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality; and so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:53, 55.)

Christ is yet to be "*Christus Consummator*" as well as "*Christus Salvator*."

II

The Ethical Values of the Atonement

BUT our discussion would be incomplete if we did not go on to show that the death of Christ scripturally viewed, and extending itself in the various ways indicated, is always profoundly ethical.

In the first place the atonement, as seen from God's point of view and as related to the whole universe as moral, was intended to meet a supreme ethical exigency which had arisen in that universe from the incoming of sin. There was a matter of ill desert attached to the sin-principle, and with this God had to deal, if he was righteously and adequately to save his creatures. This was the source of all true ethics in us; and with this matter God did ethically and yet sav-

ingly deal. This root of ethics in God himself anticipated and presupposed all other practical ethical conceptions which can come within the range of our thought.

Then as to the effect of the atonement upon us to render our character ethical, as it takes effect upon us, the atonement is as ethical as new creation could make it. The atonement is most intimately related to the regeneration of believers. In Scripture thought, it is always presupposed that he who believes on Jesus will subject himself to his gracious authority. As he does this, he will experience the new birth; and if he properly views and responds to Christ's work in his behalf, he will continue to live out his life in the habit of constant surrender to the new form of authority to which he has impliedly once for all surrendered. In other words, the deepest sort of a moral and even spiritual life is implied the moment one intelligently grasps what it is to be a Christian at all.

In the initial confession of his faith, the

believer is expected to acknowledge that in the act of his conversion, the old man has become resolved into death, and then in and by Christ's resurrection power he has been remade on the pattern of the risen Lord. Paul expresses this transcendent process in terms of a psychology peculiar to himself, quite outside the psychologies of the schools. However, once it is settled in the mind of the Christian, that revelation may be expected to transcend his metaphysics—and one or the other always will have precedence in thought—this will not stumble him. Confessedly, the whole matter of the soul's reconstitution in Christ, is a super-metaphysical matter, and of course its psychology must be equally transcendent. According to Paul, the case in conversion is something like this: the old ego renounces itself, and through the power of the Holy Spirit a new ego takes its place. Of course this ego is new, and yet not new. "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3 : 3). To follow

the conception in the sixth chapter of Romans, the soul becomes dead to the law—or, rather, the law becomes as dead, so far as it can hold any mastery over one who has died to it—and then as alive to Christ, the soul becomes married to a new husband, even to the risen Lord” (Rom. 7 : 2-4). As the result of this union the disciple has his “fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life” (Rom. 6 : 22). Henceforth, the soul serves as the new man “in newness of the spirit,” rather than as the old man “in the oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7 : 6). The soul through its relation to Christ’s death, with its necessary implicates, is reconstituted in God; and reconstitution by the divine Spirit is unspeakably deeper in moral quality than imitation or formal conformity to a mere statute of law could ever be. The hope that any mere natural ethic consciously dependent on sinful man’s power of will to do right, can ever take the place of that deeper, organic thing of which we have been speaking, is entirely futile.

In biblical thought, the regenerate soul is conceived as one who has jointly died with Christ, who has been jointly buried with him, who is now with him jointly raised, and jointly seated in the heavenlies. He is "in Christ"; and as thus reconstituted, the vitality of Christ himself flows into him, and will render him in the end a holy man. The entire course of the renewed man is to be habitually lived, as a second nature, on a new principle. Paul represented himself as dying daily, as "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body" (2 Cor. 3 : 10). He says of professed believers that they have "been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2 : 12). This working of God was what brought the power to live in a new way. It was naught less than the operation of this infinite divine Spirit. It had in it all his efficiency. It was a

power which Paul describes as “working in me mightily” (Col. 1 : 29).¹

It is only by blindness to, or abuse of, the implications of the atonement, that any Christian can become even careless in respect to the moralities of the new life.

III

The Church's One Foundation

THE Scriptures go so far as to say that he who does become thus careless, is thereby virtually guilty of a recrucifixion of the Lord Jesus. The remarkable passage in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews has its significance in this very thought. The apostle says, “Wherefore, leaving the doctrine of the principles (or the elementary things) of Christ, let us press on unto perfection (or maturity); not laying again a foundation of repentance

¹ Whereunto I am also toiling contending according to his inward working which is unwordly working itself in me with power. (Rendering of J. B. Rotherham.)

from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6 : 1, 2). That is to say, a foundation of the gospel having been laid once for all in the sacrificial death of Christ, there is neither need nor possibility of laying it a second time. The only new foundation conceivable would be a different one—an entirely different one. Such a foundation, could it be laid, would be destructive of everything contemplated by Christ or his gospel. The apostle is saying that it is entirely impossible for such as thus shift the groundwork of things, to have any valid hope left of an ethical status on which they can hope for an acceptable life before God. Hence the pertinency of the language used in verses four, five, and six. "For as touching those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come,

and then fall away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." I am aware that this passage has by some been thought to be dealing with the question of the practical possibilities or impossibilities of personal restoration of one who has conceivably fallen out of a state of grace. It, however, seems to me much nearer to the spirit of the apostle's argument throughout the Epistle to interpret the falling away referred to as a falling away from the one only and exclusive foundation for ultimate holiness which has been laid in the death of Christ. The writer is speaking of the fatality of setting aside "the church's one foundation." This, of course, has to do with the whole matter of the status of the believer under the ægis of the one atoning death of Christ, eventuating in his high-priesthood.

The "first principles of the doctrine of Christ"—the foundation principles—are

those principles which root themselves in his redeeming death. "From these foundation principles," therefore, reasons the apostle, "let us press on unto perfection." Failing of these, there is nothing to go back to. The real foundation of everything is in the redeeming death. Grant that this foundation is once for all laid, and such implied results as these follow: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the teaching of baptisms, laying on of hands (or bestowal of the Spirit), resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment." In other words, the language of the Hebrews, just considered, implies what I have been pointing out in the preceding pages; namely, that the death of Christ is a death plus many other things which are involved in it: such as the resurrection, the baptisms symbolic of it, the gift of the Spirit, the anticipation of the judgment (as a saving judgment), relation to the powers of the age to come, etc.

Now, argues the apostle, to abandon the old foundation, and to presume to lay a dif-

ferent one, is to do an abortive thing, nay a spiritually criminal thing; is logically to apostatize. Therefore, pleads the author of the Epistle, shun it. On the contrary, "Let us press on (from the foundation already laid, other than which no man can lay) unto maturity." If one would realize how positive a thing is the conception of evangelical ethics entertained by the author of this Epistle, let him run through the series of impassioned injunctions to holy living pressed upon the conscience of the early church. "Let us fear," "Let us give diligence," "Let us draw near," "Let us consider," "Let us hold fast," "Let us call to remembrance," "Let us cast not away our beginning-confidence," "Let us lay aside every weight," "Let us follow peace," "Let us have grace," "Let brotherly love continue," "Let us go forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach," "Let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually," and much besides.

Surely this does not sound as if this most

evangelical of all writers would afford warrant to any to indulge in non-ethical or even careless living, because they had been redeemed by the one great sacrificial act of Christ's death. The arguments for holy living adduced in this most evangelical book, have never been matched in all literature.

The author of this Epistle, whoever he was, takes the greatest pains to warn us against the presumption of seeking to lay any different foundation for practical living than that already laid. But especially to point out that to try to lay any other is to incur the double guilt of inviting responsibility for the recrucifixion of the world's Redeemer. We are sure this is not always realized by those who show impatience of the evangelical unities. The fact is, that the one foundation of Christ's death as properly understood, once set aside, leaves no ground of salvation whatever in the biblical sense of the word. There is no other dependence. The first crucifixion of Christ was a sin which the divine clemency

covered. God himself made provision for it, as Peter abundantly set forth in his sermon at Pentecost; but the re-crucifixion of the crucified is a blasphemy so serious in import, as to negative all the terms of salvation ever promulgated even by the God of grace. Therefore to propose an ethic without the cross (assuming that the bearings of such a thing are understood), in Scripture logic, is to invite damnation, even "the second death." This is to have "trodden under foot the Son of God, to have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy (or common) thing, and to have done despite to the spirit of grace." It is to insult grace. "For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more (as a groundwork for salvation), a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10 : 26, 27). This world is a "once for all" redeemed world, or it is a twice for all suicid-

ing world, from the ruin of which there is at least no promise to save.

III

The Sin of Contempt of Grace

A PASSAGE in the Epistle of Jude strikingly corroborates the teaching just adduced from Hebrews. This apostle is writing of what he calls "the common salvation." He is exhorting "those who are called beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." He says he was constrained to exhort the church to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." And then the apostle goes on to state that certain ones are foes of the church who will seek "to turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness (or wantonness), and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." Now, after this prologue, the apostle proceeds to say, "I desire

to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward—the Greek word is *δεύτερον*, meaning at a second stage—destroyed them that believed not.” The point of this reference is this: God by an act of pure grace had brought Israel out of Egypt—he had redeemed them; but this redemption of grace which he waited to consummate at Kadesh Barnea they despised. Therefore he turned them back into the wilderness to wander until that generation perished. He thus “destroyed them”—left them to perish *a second time*—for their contempt of grace. And the apostle gives two more illustrations of yet others who had turned special divine favor into “wantonness,” for they would seek another basis of security from sin than that which the Divine favor had provided. So “the angels (in the prehistoric period) that kept not their own principality—that original assured standing of peace and safety, but afterward—at a second stage of

rebellion against the divine security for them, left their proper habitation"; and so God "hath kept (them) in everlasting bonds under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." And still further, Jude instances the peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah, as examples of another instance of those who *at a second stage* turned the proffered grace of God into wantonness, preferring the indulgence of their own grossness to the acceptance of the mercy represented to those cities by the visit of the redeeming angels who came to Lot, and impliedly, as I think, to all allied with him who would accept the Divine clemency in the spirit of it. So "these also—these wicked Sodomites—and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to their characteristic vices and threatened their exercise upon the very angelic messengers that came to their city with a proffer of salvation with righteous Lot, "are set forth as an example—an example of repudiators of grace—

suffering the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 5-7).

The teaching of all this unquestionably is, that to do despite to a salvation of grace when once it has been understood, as a finality, at that *second stage* of the temptation which is ever recurring in the life of unbelieving men, is presumptuously to put one's self outside of any salvation which God has provided and promised.

All hope of the final ethical attainment is organically connected with the death of Christ. It implies the incoming of the breath of the risen and glorified new Adam, alone equal to the need. If, at the beginning, it was necessary that God should breathe into the first Adam, that he might become "a living soul," it was just as needful that the "Second man," "a life-giving spirit," should inbreathe the new man that was to be, in order to generate there the highest life, even the resurrection-life of the Son of God (1 Cor. 15 : 45). On the birth day of the church, it was this "mighty rush-

ing breath"—not "wind"—which came from the God-man at the right hand of the Father, that empowered the disciples afresh for all the tasks of the new-born church.

XLV

The Power of the Cross Not Outworn

AND yet with all the solemnity of such teaching as that to which we have just referred in the preceding chapter we often now-a-days hear it said that the ethics connected with the atonement of Christ have become outworn: that the death of Christ as an ethical power has broken down.

To this we reply that the ethics which logically and properly grow out of the death of Christ as the Scriptures set forth, has been but feebly applied. Especially has this been so in those quarters where it is often so flippantly spoken of.

Between two errors the moral situation

has grievously suffered. On the one hand, a crass view, which has narrowed the death of Christ to a mere pathetic tragedy, ending in the physical dying of Jesus, and that a dying severely apart from Deity, even as unjustly permitted or inflicted by Deity, has of course failed to beget the intended ethical power implied in the New Testament idea. The real situation involved in the nature of Christ's death, and its relation to men, has been sadly misconceived; and of course correspondingly false inferences have been drawn; and the whole matter of the death of Christ has been confusedly or falsely preached. Strong revolt in many quarters could not but result.

On the other hand, an ultra-radical view, blind to the nature of Christ's person, and to the true import of his death, as a revelation of the depths of human sin, and inappreciative of that death as a demonstration of the divine sacrificial love, has discarded that death in superficial impatience as having any other ethical value than that which

would attach to some noble martyr. Of course those who thus view Christ's death would find little basis in it for moving men to such a righteousness as the claims of a holy God demand, or as a truly enlightened conscience calls for. Those who have fallen into this unfortunate and superficial narrowness, and who have taken up with mere natural ethics, as a well-meaning pagan would do, have sadly missed the way. Among many other mischievous results, they have failed to see themselves as either lost or savable in any true biblical sense. Between these two errors, the cause of true evangelical righteousness has grievously suffered.

It cannot be ignored that in estimating the ethical values in the death of Christ, however truly viewed, the antipathy of the carnal heart has ever constituted a chief difficulty in the appreciation and application of these values. There is an "offence of the cross," quite apart from all rational considerations concerning it, that mere reason

cannot remove. In the end, however, if the moral situation is squarely faced, this "offence of the cross,"¹ by a profound paradox, becomes something in which to glory. The paradox cannot be escaped: it is involved in the thoroughness and divineness of the process of sin's cure.

EV

Redemption and Stewardship

IN the practical application of the process of sin's cure, how profound an energy would be found in this principle of redemption if it were applied to the recovery of men from their characteristic perversities, for example, from the power of greed!

During the recent visit to America of the Right Rev. A. F. Winnington Ingram, the lord bishop of London, he preached a sermon in New York in the hearing of some of the Wall Street magnates on "Christian

¹ See appendix E.

Stewardship." The bishop's text was the verse, "Render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward" (Luke 16 : 2). The teaching was to the effect that life was never an ownership but a stewardship. Man owns nothing as between himself and God. "If," said the bishop, "the principle of Christian stewardship were truly carried out, it would cleanse the life on both sides of the Atlantic. All the evils of the world are due to the neglect of the Christian principle that we are here only as custodians of what we have, be it wealth or anything else." And on what did the thought-provoking bishop ground this element in ethics? On nothing less than the fact that through Christ's gospel we are redeemed beings: we have a redeemed status in this world—the only status that any one has—and the obligations that are ours under a redeemed economy, commit us universally, as redeemed beings to a grateful use of that which is put into our hands, to live out a career of stewardship, not only to God, but

also to our fellows. Said the bishop, "That we are here as custodians of what we have, is founded on the fact that Christ died to redeem men, and again place them in fair (or justified) standing in the world." "If," continued the bishop, "city officials and government servants would live up to these two thoughts—that they are redeemed beings, and that as such they are stewards—there would be no boodling, no miscarriage of justice, and no broken hearts."

The whole philosophy of the recovery, or better yet, of the preservation of our fellow-men from the immoderate desire for gain, whether from the love of property as such, or from the love of the game in the acquirement of it, is rooted, according to the philosophy of the bishop, in the principle of redemption. It is from a loss of the sense of the redeemed position into which Christians have been brought by the death of Christ that many wealthy Christians, as they grow rich, lose that sense of stewardship which once characterized them. Is it not certain

that men who have become possessed of a passion for mere accumulation, if they ever escape its thrall, are more likely to do so in view of the passion of Calvary's cross than under any other influence whatsoever?

ÆVI

Redemption Recovering from Criminality

THEN to take another type of perversity, say that of a criminal long hardened by whatever means, where but to the cross shall we look for a power equal to the recovery of such a one? Probably few literary men of the last century more earnestly pondered this question than Victor Hugo. He was deeply engrossed with the conviction that the penal laws of his time in Europe were deeply responsible for the awful depths to which the criminal classes had sunk. But whatever was Hugo's immediate aim in his writings, the question ever uppermost in

them is: "Given such and such a pervert, how shall he be restored to righteousness and to God?" Hugo's conception of the difficulty of the problem found its strongest concrete expression in the creation of his highly dramatic character, Jean Valjean. This Valjean, for the crime of stealing a loaf of bread for the feeding of his sister's seven starving children, was sentenced to serve four years in the galleys, and then his sentence was repeatedly prolonged to fifteen years more for successive but vain efforts to escape. The result was that when he was released he came forth from the prison more a demon than a man. Petrified as the heart of this man had become, Hugo, however, believed there was a moral power able to restore him. This power Hugo lodged in that other creation of his genius, the good Monseigneur Myriel, or Bishop Bienvenu of D——.

On the fourth night after the release of Jean Valjean, this bishop at the risk of his own life gave hospice to the sorry ex-con-

vict. The convict, however, was morally incapable at first of responding to a mercy so foreign to him. So after sleeping for a few hours on the outside of the soft bed put at his disposal, he arose, crept through the partly open door of the bishop's room adjoining, looking leeringly and murderously upon the calm features of his unappreciated benefactor, hesitating whether to kiss or to brain him, stole the bishop's table silver, slipped through the open window, leaped the wall like a tiger, and went his way to he knew not what. The next morning found this Jean Valjean under arrest of the village gendarmes in possession of the stolen silver, and he was brought back to confront the bishop for a settlement. This bishop, however, surprised the gendarmes by insisting that not only the silver with which the convict had been seized, but also all the rest which remained to him—some fine candlesticks—had also been “given” to Jean Valjean. So the officers of the law were dismissed and the good bishop, before

sending the ex-convict on his way, dispossessed of the sense of outlawry, whispered to him these words: "Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil but to good. It is your soul that I buy from you. I withdraw it from black thoughts, and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God." All this the bishop had purposed to do, and he did, *at the risk of his life*. As Jean Valjean goes out from the bishop a second time, a short, sharp attack of his old diabolism, in his meeting with the little Savoyard, seized him, and then in the reflection, the great deep of the man's nature is broken up; he who for nineteen years had not shed a tear, overflows with grief and becomes a renewed man.

As the curtain falls on that sublime first act in Hugo's drama, we are permitted to see the renewed and penitent ex-convict—another Jean Valjean—"in the attitude of prayer, kneeling on the pavement in the shadow, in front of the door of the bishop's palace"—of that bishop who, for the poor

convict's sake, had *laid down his life and taken it again* in a redemptive achievement.

On what power less than this of the divinely sacrificial life, in its unique, expiating energy, could Hugo have built for such a moral miracle as he has pictured for us? In every principle of his story, Hugo has been marvelously true to the New Testament idea of the atonement of God in Christ.¹ We have only to raise the sacrificial, expiating suggestiveness of the good Bishop Welcome to the nth power, and ground it in Deity, and we have the biblical conception of the divine atonement, and one all the more effective withal, because clothed with flesh and blood, thus reincarnating the divine idea. In actual life, the annals of the Salvation Army, of the Water Street Mission, New York, and kindred movements of a

¹ Elsewhere, in his "Reveries on God," Hugo has this impressive comment on the atonement principle, as associated with the spiritual principle originally in the mass. "I respect the Sunday mass in my parish. I attend it rarely; this is because I am assisting perpetually, reverent, dreaming, and attentive, at that other eternal mass which God is celebrating night and day in nature, his great church."

sacrificial sort would supply numerous real instances such as that which Hugo's fancy has painted. Deeper, more original than this, there is no ethical power.

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to flee from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead.
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

EVIII

Redemption Overcoming Heathenism

IF in a yet wider sphere we consider the task of renewing or elevating the moral ideals of those we call heathen; where shall we find the power adequate but in Christ's cross? With respect to this situation, we need not paint conditions darker than they are. Heathen peoples are not utterly degraded. There are bright spots even in that darkness. There are relics of natural religion, and of primitive revelation also, ante-

dating the ethnic religions which enter into them. These ethnic faiths themselves, with all their corruptions and perversions, have some values, and they witness to fundamental verities. They have served under Providence to keep alive certain social and civic ideals of order and human government. They have their values for the family, the community, and the State.

Nay more, since the incoming of the modern missionary movement, with its message of the Christian redemption, numerous people in Oriental lands, who as yet hold aloof from the Christian community, have received much light from Christ. Doubtless very many such are secretly true believers in him. To this fact Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, who among visitors to the East, has had exceptional opportunities for gaining the confidence of many whom no missionary resident in those lands would probably reach, has lately given most emphatic testimony. In a recent address before the American Board at Cleveland, he declared

that in his last visit to India he came to have positive knowledge of great numbers of cultivated and educated Hindu gentlemen who no longer have association with the temples, who rather are devoted worshippers of the Lord Jesus Christ, but who, because of the embarrassment of the political situation, do not identify themselves with the missionary community. Doctor Hall gave several striking instances of such. His testimony might be corroborated by many other witnesses. Doctor Hall, however, further brought out in his recent address that with all these encouragements, there is this saddening feature also, which all interested in the missionary problem will do well to regard: namely, "that whereas the Fatherhood of God is growing rapidly in the consciousness of cultivated men in India and in Japan, the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, in which is the very essence of the Christian religion, is a matter from which men draw back." "The tendency to decadence in the religious life

of the American people," also, Doctor Hall attributes to the same evil.

"The Fatherhood of God," as Doctor Hall truly says, "has only become intelligent to human experience in Jesus Christ. 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.'"

"How then," asks Doctor Hall, "can we assist the people of the East in the discovery of the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

The Apostle Paul tells us in his first Epistle to the Corinthians that "No man can say that Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12 : 3). And the apostle says this in a very significant connection. In the former part of the Epistle the apostle had been dealing with many carnalities, arising from its old heathenism, most blighting to the church at Corinth. Coming, however, to the twelfth chapter he rises to a higher and distinctive plane, and thus speaks :

"Now concerning 'the spiritualities' brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

Ye know that when ye were Gentiles (or heathen), ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led." The characteristic working of idolatry was to lead its votaries into vagaries, they knew not what, and in directions they knew not whither. Now on this dark background of their previous condition, Paul paints the bright thing he wishes them to know and realize. That bright thing was this: that there was now open to them the knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Sovereign and Lord. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema"; that is, 'rejected'; and on the other hand, "No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

How then is the great East to be led to say that Jesus Christ is Lord? We believe there is but one answer. It must be brought into the Spirit, that it may learn that high and blessed ascription. And this experience must come through the realization that

Jesus is preeminently an atoning Saviour. Orientals need to be brought to precisely the point to which the convicted multitudes under Peter's sermon at Pentecost were brought, namely, that having been impliedly by their sin racial sharers in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, they must when enlightened either persist in the sin which involves rejection of him, and in their carnality call him "anathema" (rejected), or they must entirely reverse their attitude, accept him, and trusting in his atoning death for their salvation, call him "Lord." No third ground is possible. It was the realization of this dilemma that overwhelmed Peter's congregation with conviction. They saw that that same Jesus whom they had wickedly crucified had been proved by his resurrection to be the Christ and Lord, and they could do no other than cry out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were at first smitten with despair. Peter's answer gave them relief. It was the same answer in principle, though different in form, that

Doctor Hall would have given; and which he has so strongly stated in his chapter on "The Recovery of the Apostolic Theology" in his book "The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion." "So repent that your profession will speak of your own death and resurrection with that Saviour whose death and resurrection proves his Lordship." In other words, "Give to the atoning work of Christ the place that he himself gives to it in his dying and living again; and in the very realization of that death-resurrection process you will become conscious for yourselves of the reality of the Lordship of Christ."

XVIII

The Sovereignty of Saviourhood

IN order to that power over one's life which will produce Christian character, the sovereignty of Christ must be experienced through his Saviourhood. It is some-

thing deeper than an inference from an argument. As Dr. A. J. Gordon used to represent: "The tinkling of bells alternating with the pomegranates on the skirts of our High Priest's garments above, can be heard by the ear spiritually attuned." The actual living Christ can be experientially known as alive for us. After the surrender of our rebellious wills to his will, by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us, we intuitively know that he lives and reigns above in our behalf.

One of Doctor Hall's hosts, an Indian prince, remarked to him: "I have visited the West, and the most wonderful thing in the West that I have seen is that which I may call the Christian character of some of your greatest Christian men"; and then he added these significant words: "So far as I can analyze the situation, it seems to me that in order to produce this peculiar thing which we call Christian character, there shall be (needs to be) a mystical faith in Christ as Saviour." Aye, verily! This high

Christian character in the West or East, wherever it exists, is primarily due to the experience in the soul of a mastery gained over it through the realization of Christ as Saviour. This Christ the Saviour, in time, by virtue of his experienced Saviourhood, is thereby welcomed as the accepted Master of the soul. Aye, and he is a Master worth having. "He conquers rebel me, and having disarmed me gives me back my sword." Perhaps no modern mind better understood this paradox than the blind, now sainted, George Matheson of Scotland, who thus phrased it:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conq'ror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thine arms
And strong shall be my hand.

My heart is weak and poor
Till it the master find;
It has no spring of action sure,
It varies with the wind.

It cannot freely move
 Till thou has wrought its chain;
 Enslave it with thy matchless love,
 And deathless it shall reign.

My will is not my own
 Till thou hast made it thine;
 If it would reach the monarch's throne
 It must its crown resign:
 It only stands unbent
 Amid the clashing strife,
 When on thy bosom it has leant
 And found in thee its life.

“The one whom before I feared, I now discover to be my surest friend. He so loved my well-being that he himself entered into obligation for my sin and guilt, and having borne it, welcomes me to share his throne.” The soul's chief need is to find the right master—for master of some kind as a dependent being the soul will and must have—and having found him in the Christ of God, the soul returns to its normal, and besides finds all the guilty past forgiven and cancelled.

In bringing the heathen to accept the sovereignty of Christ, it is of the first mo-

ment that they should be impressed in the concrete by missionaries of such a stamp as show that they themselves are subject to that sovereignty, brought to it through some deep and critical extremity of their life. It is the man who has been rescued by Christ—by his superhuman power and grace, not one who merely believes a doctrine about him—who really knows Christ. Orientals will come into subjection to Christ only through similar experiences of the salvation of Christ. The blessedness of the sovereignty is learned by paradox, only through the absolutely surrendered will, and this surrendered will comes through some sweet persuasion. To be of worth, it must be voluntary. It is usually made possible through the heart-break which occurs in some clear vision of the surprisingly sacrificial work of Calvary. The vision of the cross and the surrendered will are correlatives of each other. Sometimes one and sometimes the other is first in the order of time. Each eventuates in the other. The realization of Saviourhood

induces surrender, and through the surrender of the will, the Holy Spirit brings the sense of salvation.

Bishop Handley Moule, of Durham, England, in the central crisis of his rare spiritual life thus sung of it:

My glorious Victor, Prince Divine,
Clasp these surrendered hands in thine;
At length my will is all thine own,
Glad vassal of a Saviour's throne.

My Master, lead me to thy door,
Pierce this now willing ear once more,
Thy bonds are freedom, let me stay
With thee to toil, endure, obey.

Yes, ear and hand and thought and will,
Use all in thy dear slav'ry still;
Self's weary liberties I cast
Beneath thy feet, there hold them fast!

Tread them still down, and then I know
These hands shall with thy gifts o'erflow;
And quickened ears shall hear the tone
Which tells me thou and I are one.

Other things being equal, the millions of India, China, and Japan will be brought under the sovereignty of Christ in propor-

tion as a biblical view of the saving death of Christ is preached, and as the preachers of it embody their doctrine in their own personalities, as did the good bishop in Hugo's story. The only men who ever have had saving power over the heathen are those who have lived under the spell of the Christ of Calvary: who themselves have become personified extensions of the atoning principle.

III

Japanese Trophies of the Cross

DOUBTLESS one of the highest types of Japanese Christianity yet developed among Orientals was the late Joseph Hardy Neesima, the founder of the Doshisha College at Kyoto; thanks mainly, under God, to the highly Christian treatment of his providential foster-father, the late Alpheus Hardy of Boston, and his equally Christian instructor at Amherst College, President Julius H. Seelye. The seriousness with

which the humble-hearted Seelye viewed his responsibility may be inferred from the circumstance that on the first night after Neesima was entered as a student at Amherst, the godly president lay awake all night reflecting on the charge laid upon him in the direction to his college of its first Oriental student.

A feature of Neesima's Christianity was that he had a keen appreciation of the vicarious and redeeming work of Christ. During the past summer I found myself, on a second visit to the East, a visitor to the Doshisha College at Kyoto. Passing through one of the several buildings, my guide, one of the devoted teachers of the institution, remarked: "This is the room in which one morning at a chapel exercise Neesima broke to shivers a bamboo cane in vicarious infliction upon himself of a punishment deserved by some disorderly boys in the school, but whom Neesima in his holy love preferred to spare rather than punish." Fragments of that shivered cane are still

preserved in Japan as mementos of the Christly spirit of the revered Neesima.

A second striking example of the way in which another Japanese of Neesima's spirit was impressed by the same atonement-believing President Seelye, because he himself so illustrated the atonement, is that of Uchimura, an earnest Christian man yet living in Tokyo. He too, with great trepidation, once went to Amherst College to seek admission as a student. From some things he had heard of the virility of the able President Seelye, he went as if he were "going to his doom, expecting to be stunned by the president's imperious and Platonic majesty." Instead, however, he met a character of rare Christian meekness, "a large, well-built figure, the leonine eyes suffused with tears, the warm grasp of the hands unusually tight, orderly words of welcome and sympathy," so that as he says, "I at once felt a peculiar ease in myself. I confided myself to his help, which he most kindly promised. I retired, and from that

time on my Christianity has taken an entirely new direction. . . Satan's power over me began to slacken ever since I came into contact with him. Gradually I was exorcised of my sins, original and derived." Uchimura speaks also, with deep feeling, of a morning in which, in the president's class, he was encouraged openly before his fellows to narrate how he came to believe Christianity as the truth; how especially he found the "reconciliation of the moral schism (in his soul) only in Christ," and concluded his testimony with Luther's words, "I can do no other, so help me God." The logical outcome of this splendid mastery of the great president over this Oriental, was of course to bring him sweetly under the sovereignty of the Christ who was his own Saviour.

It may well be questioned whether any who have recently arisen in Japan that have fallen back upon natural ethics in lieu of the cross-principle for moral power over their fellows, or for bringing others of their long

paganized countrymen into subjection to the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, have found any substitute worthy of the name. Just now it is Japan's temptation to seek such a substitute, and it threatens the foundations of everything Christian.



Power of the Cross Over a Hindu Mob

DR. JACOB CHAMBERLAIN ¹ of the American Reformed Church, who labored a half-century as a missionary in India, in the year 1863 found himself with some of his native helpers within a walled city in the Nizam's kingdom of Hyderabad. The city was full of Brahman priests and Mohammedan zealots. On discovering the Christian missionary in their midst, they ordered him to

¹ Recently deceased.

leave the place at once; and a rabble had been incited to stone him. Doctor Chamberlain, however, bravely facing the mob thus spoke: "Brothers, it is not to revile your gods that I have come this long way; far from it. I have come with a royal message from a King far higher than your Nizam. I have come to tell you a story sweeter than mortal ear ever heard before. But it is evident that this multitude does not care to hear it. I, however, see five men before me, who I perceive (from their sympathetic faces) wish to hear my story. Will you all please step back a little and allow these five to hear? When I have finished you may come forward and throw your stones." Then in a subdued tone the missionary addressed the Brahmans: "What is it that you chant as you go to the river for your daily ablutions? Is it not this? And the missionary chanted in Sanskrit a few strains from one of their Vedas, the meaning of which was: "I am a sinner, my actions are sinful. My soul is sinful.

All that pertains to me is polluted with sin. Do thou, O God, that hast mercy on those who seek thy refuge, do thou take away my sin."

These Brahmans at once became the missionary's friends. One who correctly chants their Vedas and their Mantras is always looked up to with respect. "Now," continued the missionary, "do you know how God can do what you ask? How he can take away the burden of your sin and give you relief? Brothers, is it possible for us to expiate our own sins? Can we by painful journeys to all the holy places change those sinful natures that you bemoan? Does not your own Telugu poet, Vemana, say:

'Tis not by roaming deserts wild, nor gazing at
the skies;

'Tis not by bathing in the stream, nor pilgrimage
to shrine;

But thine own heart must thou make pure, and
then, and then alone

Shalt thou see him no eye hath kenned, shalt thou
behold thy king?

How then can our hearts be made pure so

that we may see God? I have learned the secret; I will tell it you."

Then, says Doctor Chamberlain, I told the story of stories, recounted the love of God the Father, the birth of Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem, his wonderful life here below, his blessed words, his marvelous deeds of healing and mercy, and the mob became an audience. Gradually I had raised my voice until as I spoke in the clear and resonant Telugu, all down those streets the multitude could hear; and as I told them of the Saviour's rejection by those he had come to save, and pictured the scene of Calvary, in the graphic words he himself gave me that day, when for us and our salvation he was left to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—told them of the laying his body in the tomb, of his bursting the bars of death and coming forth triumphant over the last enemy; and that all we now had to do was to repent and forsake our sins and lift up prayer to him, I saw tears coursing and dropping on the

pavement, from which they had torn up the stones with which to stone us.

“Now,” said I, “folding my arms and standing before them, I have finished my story. You may stone me. I will make no resistance.” Stone him then! They could no more have stoned him than they could stone the angel Gabriel! The same power that held in leash the lions before Daniel held them in restraint. “No, no!” said that cowed Indian mob, “we do not want to stone you now. We did not know whose messenger you were, nor what you had come to tell us. Do those books that you have tell more about this wonderful Redeemer?” “Yes,” said I, “this is the history of his life on earth.” And taking up the Gospel of Luke, I read brief portions here and there, adding, “I have not told you half of his gracious words and deeds. Would you not like to buy some of the histories of the Redeemer Jesus so that you can learn all about him?” They purchased all the gospels and tracts we had, and appointed

a deputation of their best men to escort us to our camp, begging us to forgive them for the insults they had heaped upon us for they knew not whose messengers we were.¹

There are two things in the preceding incident important to note. First, that the power in this appeal to subdue the passion of the mob was the story of self-sacrifice in a Redeemer who was willing to give himself to expiate the guilt and stain which even the Vedic hymns confessed were beyond man's power to remove—the story of a full and free divine pardon and cleansing. Secondly, that the spirit of this same self-sacrifice in the missionary, which gave him the courage voluntarily to face the mob, and welcome even like Stephen, his stoning unto death, if he could but deliver his message, reenforced the story and gave it power. It was an instance of the power of doctrine incarnate in personality.

These two things—the intrinsic quality of

¹ This narrative is condensed from a leaflet published by the Reformed Church Mission Board, New York.

the unique story and the living embodiment of it, at the risk of his life, in the missionary himself—under the divine Spirit were what conquered the mob and brought it into a hitherto unheard-of subjection to a divine authority. These were the conquering forces subduing to the sovereignty of Christ. The appreciation of that sovereignty depended on something behind it. That something was the new perception and appreciation of the divine Saviourhood of Christ. It was this which commended the sovereignty as worthy.

It was the combination of these two things—Christ's objective sacrificial work and his own sacrificial life—so wondrously in John G. Paton, of the New Hebrides, that made him invincible among the cannibals of Aniwa. Even those bloodthirsty savages were won by thousands into adoring subjection to Paton's majestic moral power and to Paton's Lord.

When and where, however, among any heathen people, have abstractions on morals,

as exhibited in Jesus himself as a mere example, apart from the atoning realities, ever produced such renewals in life and character as have marked evangelical work in the South Seas and in numberless other mission lands? It is by these atoning realities, O Galilean, that thou hast conquered.



Testimony of Dr. Griffith John of China

RECENTLY a company of missionary secretaries by arrangement met in Yonkers, N. Y., the veteran Griffith John, who for over fifty years has labored as a missionary in China, and who was about to sail again, at seventy-six years of age, to devote the remnant of his days to China's salvation. Located as he has been in Hankow, the great central city of that empire, for forty-five years, he and his missionary asso-

ciates of the London Mission have wrought on until now about eight thousand Christians are connected with the mission under the oversight of about twenty associated missionaries.

At the meeting referred to, after a formal engrossed address was presented to Doctor John, and several informal addresses had been made, expressing the greetings and appreciations of the several missionary societies of this country on his long and effective career, Doctor John responded at considerable length, taking his brethren closely into his confidence.

The great missionary told us of a time, "back in the seventies," when he passed through a period of great wretchedness on account of his "lack of power," and of how new power came to him, much as it came to Mr. Moody in New York one day, just before he went to England for his greatest campaign there.

But deep down, far below everything else which the great missionary testified of that

day, was this: "I have been," said he, "a strong believer in the atonement; not that I understand it, but the fact that we have the remission of sins through Christ, and this fact resting upon another fact, the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and that now that he is risen and lives forever, he is equal to anything even in China. My theme has ever been, Jesus Christ can save from sin, from any sin whatsoever, the sin of opium-smoking, the sin of gambling, or of impurity, or aught else."

The experienced veteran then went on to give particular instances of salvation, as illustrated in his field. He told of one Liu the Sawyer. One day this man Liu came to the missionary and said, "You have been telling us that Jesus can save from sin, then he should be able to save me." "He is," responded the missionary. "What are your sins?" "They are gambling, opium-smoking, and many more." From his own account the man could scarcely have been worse. "Then," said Doctor John, "I took

the man into the vestry of the chapel, where we could be alone, and I got out of him more specific confessions. Then I asked him, can you trust Christ to save you from these sins?" He answered "yes." "Then," said I, "let us pray." "And we got down together, and the man prayed for himself. He accepted Christ and was saved; he faced about, got victory over his sins, and for thirty years he has lived faithfully and led many others to Christ."

Doctor John also told us of another case of a man named Wei, who at one time said, "Surely there is no hope for me." "Why not?" asked the missionary. "Because I am such a confirmed opium-smoker and gambler. My father and my mother also were gamblers, and I have gambled all my life, and I could not possibly stop." "But Christ can save you from even that, if you will." "Then he shall," responded the man. "He also knelt down and gave himself up and was thoroughly saved; and he became an evangelist, a real apostle of wonderful

power.” Doctor John said he thought this man was the means of winning nearly two thousand souls to Christ in the district where he lived. The missionary then added, “If you would bring men into subjection to the mastery of Christ, dismiss your habit of saying, ‘Jesus can save from sin in general’; get men to be definite in making their confessions; and then say to them, Jesus can put his finger on that sin, and he can save you from that sin.”

To derive the just lesson from the examples quoted: is not the law of power under the Spirit of God in this matter of bringing the heathen into subjection to Christ two-fold? first, in the preaching of the Saviourhood of Jesus Christ through his redeeming cross? and secondly, in the correlative habitual and manifest submission of the preacher himself to that same Saviourhood?

He who lives and works upon this plane will also be able to tell how the death of Christ saves, and saves unto the uttermost.

What is needed is that on a universal

scale, in all lands where Christ's work is attempted, there shall be a return to such ideals and practices as those represented in such apostles as Neesima and Paton, as Chamberlain and Griffith John.

XXXII

The Cross the Soul's Last Resource

THE great Albrecht Ritschl, after years of profound study, seemed to have persuaded himself, as he has since persuaded many others in Europe and America, that the Christian religion can find a sufficient basis for faith in the mere subjective realm—the experiential—apart from the validity of the transcendent historic facts, as revealed in the Christian Scriptures. But this same Ritschl when he lay dying, fell back upon the historic and objective cross of Christ. True, years before, in his “History of Piet-

ism," Ritschl selected for special criticism Paul Gerhardt's rendering of Bernard of Clairvaux's hymn, known as the "Passion Hymn":

"*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden.*" ("O sacred head once wounded.") The point of Ritschl's objection was that the hymn failed to strike the true Christian note in so dwelling on the "physical sufferings of Christ" instead of on the "inner motive of obedience."

The very terms of the criticism indicate the confusions of thought that even in the minds of scholarly men have attended references to the atonement. We should quite agree with Ritschl that the "physical sufferings of Christ" by no means adequately represent the atonement. They are a minor part of those sufferings, as is urged in the earlier part of this discussion. Just what Ritschl meant by the "inner motive of obedience" also is ambiguous. If by "obedience" he meant obedience to that judgment-claim which required that God-in-Christ

should become responsible for man's sin and guilt, and in essence taste it in man's behalf, if man is to be saved, we would not demur.

In any case, whatever at an earlier stage of his life Ritschl believed the sufferings of Christ to be, or to represent, it is comforting to faith to know that in his last experience, as we are told in his life, he turned to that very Passion Hymn to which he was once so averse, as best expressing the ground of his inmost faith. In this light how meaningful even to him must have been this stanza :

Be near me when I'm dying,
O show thy cross to me!
And for my succor flying,
Come, Lord, and set me free!
These eyes new faith receiving,
From Jesus shall not move;
For he who dies believing,
Dies safely, through thy love.

To this same basis of rest and comfort we may depend, every truly Christian soul despite its temporary aberrations, in the last hour will assuredly turn.

In such a return, the soul is led into the godlike in character—for the highest self-expression of God is a redemptive sacrificial expression. To effect this, the atoning death of Christ is the direct and all-efficient agent. An agency which in its effect on character results thus, commends itself as deeply, divinely ethical, and so profoundly saving. In the death hour the celestial light will be shed on the question, how the death of Christ works to save us.

How can I better close this discussion than with the extraordinary benediction with which the Epistle to the Hebrews closes, almost every phrase of which is significant of the ethical power of the cross?

“Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen!”

Appendix A

The Atonement an Achievement

NO animal ever went to its death in conscious and purposeful love for others. No man, purposely dying for others, ever came back to a second life to present the finished first life unto God. The Son of God did both. He was first, on earth, the spotless and infinitely precious Victim. He was next, in heaven, the Priest, offering himself. . . Jesus was constituted by resurrection the "First-begotten from the dead";¹ constituted High Priest "after the power of an indissoluble life."² Ascending, above all the lower heavens, and in and through those heavens, as along a new "path of life"³ shewn to him by the Father, into the very presence of God, he there "appeared" in our behalf; offering—what? offering his "body," himself, his perfected

¹ Col. 1 : 18; Rev. 1 : 5, 6.

² 7 : 16.

³ Ps. 16 : 11.

and ended, his triumphantly surrendered earthly life. He entered "through means of his own blood,"¹ which simply stands for that perfected and surrendered life which, as we know, was terminated by violent blood-shedding. That is how he entered. Nothing could bar his way. No flaming sentinel could forbid his access to the innermost sanctuary of the Divine Presence. Yea, with that price in his hand—with that plea on his lips—no law, no power could stay his progress; upward "above all the heavens" he still ascended; inward, and still further inward, he penetrated; until, coming in before the Uncreated Light, he was once for all and forever accepted.

He—there and thus and then—"discovered age-abiding redemption."² He "found" it. So the Greek says, and why should we tone it down; why should we dilute it? Why should we shrink, by saying merely "obtained"? Nay, *eurisko*; the verb that has given us eureka! He "found"

¹ 9 : 12² *Ibid.*

it. He had been seeking it all his life of humiliation and toil and shame; and now he "found" it. The ages had been seeking it, from the time man fell; the priests of all ages, with their blood-streaming victims, had been seeking it; but could not discover it. But, now, here, in heaven, before the throne, Jesus our Lord the Son of God "found" it!

Well might the eloquent writer of this marvelous introduction place his verb, *poieo*, in the middle voice, and thus warrant our rendering it "achieved" as affirmed of an act redounding to the credit of him who dared and did it, constituting it an "achievement" to be forever after celebrated in story and in song.

Of course, the "purification" (accomplished, Heb. 1 : 3) was the fountain-head, or summary, sacrificial provision of purification, once for all secured when the peerless sacrifice was offered and accepted. It was not and could not be the individual application of the purifying potency to the

consciences of men yet unborn. That was impossible with regard to consciences not yet in being, and therefore not yet defiled. But it is important to grasp what actually lies before us in the words: "The purification—that is the sacrificial provision and potency of purifying guilty consciences—was then once for all completed."

The Greek is singularly careful to make this quite clear. For whereas this is the third great participle flowing out from that great pronoun "who" that was to carry the grand burden of thought to a climax, this third participle is in a different tense to the two preceding it. They are "present" or incipient participles, whose force runs on indefinitely; but this is "aoristic," rounded off, complete, preparing the way for the next movement, forming a firm step for the next verb to rest on. Read the passage thus: Who being and remaining the irradiated brightness of his glory and the exact representation of his very being; (who) bearing up and continuing to bear up all

things by the utterance of his power—both participles being inceptive; but now with a change: “purification of sins having there and then completely achieved, he sat down.” For nice precision, and for an open and effective march of thought, it is not easy to see how language could go further, unless by that larger amplification which we find in the body of the Epistle. Keep this in mind: being, bearing up, having achieved—sat down. The seeker of redemption, having at length discovered it, in triumph “sat down!” (J. B. Rotherham, in “Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” pp. 37-40.)

Appendix B

The Point of View of the Apostolic Testimony

WHEN we bear in mind that not one of the New Testament writers produced a manuscript that bears his name until long after the resurrection had become

a well-authenticated fact of history, we see that the death of Christ in their view could not have been looked upon as a mere tragedy and a sign of failure, but as the very opposite, even as a consummate achievement. Nor do we wonder that such a fact became so central in their witness and writings. At first none of them had understood Christ in the references to his death. They would have prevented that death if they could. During three days subsequent to the crucifixion they were despairing over what they supposed his death to mean. They thought his career as a Redeemer was ended; but shortly they saw the death culminating in the rising again. During the several Christophanies that followed, and particularly at Pentecost, they came to understand the nature of that death and its far-extending power over all the world. They then recovered the faith they had well-nigh lost; they had new and profounder experiences of the quickening energy of the cross, they gloried in it, and

set forth their matured witness as the Evangel of the ages. This view-point of the New Testament writers is a matter frequently overlooked on the part of Bible readers. They think of the paragraphs of a Matthew, a Luke, or a James as if they were jotted down at the time of the occurrences or the day after. They overlook the fact that the subject-matter of the wondrous things written in the Gospels and Epistles had been brought to the remembrance of the writers by the Holy Spirit, been meditated upon, discussed, and by divine superintendence had been matured for record decades before it was given to the world. All this also had occurred in anticipation of certain martyrdom. Under these conditions, how weighty becomes the testimony of a Paul, a Peter, or a John the Aged, from his lone exile in Patmos. We now perceive with new clearness, these "eye-witnesses of his majesty" to be seers indeed, with open vision of heaven's secrets, and with them commissioned to evangelize the whole earth.

Appendix C

God a Sufferer

IN answer to the question, "Is it not a censure on the Eternal Justice that Jesus should have been treated as the substitute for a guilty race, and should have been allowed to drink its bitter cup?" Dr. John Watson replies: "One forgets that his mind is again held in bondage by the conditions and limitations of human life. Who is this Eternal Judge but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Who is this Victim but the Eternal Son of God? It is therefore God who judges, and it is therefore God who suffers; and if the Judge himself be willing to expiate the penalty, then surely law could not be more splendidly vindicated, and the high ends of justice more fully gained. If it be counted a noble thing in a lowly member of the human race to obey the law of sacrifice, is this high achievement to be denied to God

himself? In all this universe is there to be only one person, not only absolved from this highest of laws, but also forbidden its fulfilment, and that person to be God? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that if the cross had become the condition of ethical perfection in human life, it has also been all along the condition of the perfect holiness of God, so that the sacrifice of God in Jesus Christ his Son is the very crown and glory of the highest law?" ("Doctrines of Grace," pp. 94, 95.)

Appendix D

A Penal Element in Christ's Death

WE can in a measure understand why Jesus agonized in Gethsemane when we listen to what he said in the upper room. As he gave the bread and wine, the symbol of his love and of his death, to his disciples, he declared that his blood was to be shed not simply for their good and in

revelation of the divine love, but for the remission of their sin. Because he died their sin would be forgiven, and therefore, before dying, he must have taken upon him the load of their guilt, and in dying he must have expiated the same, according to the demands of everlasting law and according to the will of God. This good Shepherd, as he explained, would lay down his life for the sheep. He would give his life as a ransom for many. If, indeed, the sin of the human race gathered in one huge penalty and cloud of guilt upon the head of Jesus Christ, then it is no wonder that he suffered in Gethsemane and besought the Father that the cup should pass from him, nor that on the cross, as he realized in his heart the horror of the world's sin, he should have cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Dr. John Watson, in "Doctrines of Grace," pp. 91, 92.)

Appendix E

The Offense of the Cross

THE offense of the cross" consists in two things: First it flashes upon the conscience the suspicion that by the very nature of the corporate racial sin—a sin which logically necessitated the sacrificial work of Calvary to redeem from it—all have become logical sharers in imposing such woes upon the Lord of Glory—a sin which is really decide. This I grant is not apparent upon its face; but upon reflection it will reveal itself to be true. If we look into the moral necessities which moved Christ to come to his cross, we shall see to our horror that it was necessary for Christ, in a deep sense, to die if we were to be spared the natural and just consequences of our sins. Seeing this we realize that we shared in the sin which made it necessary for Christ to die; we shared in the sin of the race in its solidarity. We all constructively as we face

the cross of Christ, become *particeps criminis* in the murder on Calvary, the core of the essential human guilt.

Then secondly, the cross reveals that the only way of escape from our part in this guilt, is by repudiating the sin principle in us by death to our self-will and pride, and trusting to the quickening power of the risen Lord to bring in the newness of life needed. This process puts the knife into our self-life; it threatens to destroy it, and we shrink from the pain and humiliation of it. But it is our only hope of regaining holiness. Thus the cross logically crucifies us and our sin. But the deep principle of moral death and resurrection involved in it—and it only reaches to the heart of any ethics deep enough to cure our deep disease, and in lieu thereof establish soul-health—this only can put us on the course of true holiness.

Appendix F

Falling Toward the Cross

THE late Mr. S. H. Hadley, of the New York Water Street Mission, once thus described in my hearing the manner of his conversion. He said that one day after a long debauch, and with several indictments for crime threatening him, he found himself sitting on the top of a liquor barrel in a saloon. In his dazed condition he fell into a mood almost of despair. All at once, however, there came floating to his brain a remembrance of the Cross of Calvary, and the Saviour who hung upon it. He felt strangely roused to try and go to that cross. Suiting his action to his materialized thought he climbed down from the barrel to "go" as he said "to the cross." But as he did so, he fell headlong on the floor. "But," said Mr. Hadley, "I fell toward the cross, and Jesus picked me up. Glory to his name." Hadley's account of his falling and then ris-

ing again had the whole philosophy of salvation in it. It is ever so, though the form of the work may variously express itself. In our helplessness and despair we fall, as it were, into death. But at that point the resurrection power lays hold of us, and we are surprisingly saved, saved as we never supposed we should be.

The natural mind desires at the most, simply to mend itself—to patch up its brokenness—it needs reconstruction, new birth, organic and vital renewal. This can only come through so radical a process as resurrection after there has been a death. Anything short of this is like the struggle of the Roman prisoner to rid himself of the corpse of his fellow to whom, though dead, he has been chained; and he cries out: “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” (Rom. 7 : 24.) Nothing can free him from such an incubus—such a weight of sin and corruption—but “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8 : 2). This

law, through a mystical process, works the disintegration of the sinner's carnal character—its own *corpus*—and with it that which in corruption attaches itself to it; and then behold! by a miracle of divine grace, a new vitality and energy descending from the risen Lord, by the Holy Spirit, is born in its stead. Thereby the soul begins to live. It is at this point that the philosophy of the saving process as set forth in the Bible embraces the mystical element. It is an element which has in it a dual energy—an energy which on the one hand disintegrates and on the other reintegrates the seat of character. Somewhere below our power to trace its operation in the soul, the sin principle in us, through a form of dying and living again, is brought into subjection to the power of Christ. This process is deeper than any constructive power of the human will—deeper than any contrivance or scheme. It is vital as well as vicarious.

